PRE-PRACTICUM SERVICE-LEARNING IN GRADUATE COUNSELOR EDUCATION: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

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This work is dedicated to the people who have supported and inspired me. Your presence in my life has made the amazing times more wonderful, and the difficult moments easier to bear. Thank you.

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ABSTRACT

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PRE-PRACTICUM SERVICE-LEARNING IN GRADUATE COUNSELOR EDUCATION: A QUALITATIVE CASE STUDY

Service-learning blends community service and academic learning. In graduate counselor education programs, the use of service-learning prior to practicum training is rare. However, given counseling's values, mission, and ethics, service-learning seems amenable to graduate counselor training. Previous studies of pre-practicum service-learning (PPSL) in graduate counselor education indicated that PPSL opens student counselors' eyes to the realities of professional counseling, promotes student counselors' self-efficacy, and enhances student counselors' awareness of themselves in relation to others.

The present study used qualitative interviews and document review to explore PPSL within a particular graduate counselor education program. Participants from a western university included counselor educators who taught a graduate-level counseling course integrating PPSL (n = 2), counselor education doctoral students who coordinated PPSL (n = 3), and alumni of the counselor education master's program who carried out PPSL in at least two of three graduate counseling courses (n = 7).

Four themes emerged from participants' accounts: direction, involvement, ways of learning, and time. Direction related to the structure and clarity of PPSL. Direction also pointed toward a perceived outcome of PPSL, particularly that PPSL informed student counselors' subsequent academic and professional decisions. Involvement

referred to how PPSL and practicum training were experienced by student counselors along three areas: level of participation, feelings of responsibility, and supervision. Ways of learning spoke to the ways that PPSL was understood and experienced differently than non-field-based pre-practicum training and practicum training. Time referred to the ways in which participants' perceptions and experiences of PPSL were shaped by time. Interview and document data also provided insights into the research questions that guided this study: (a) specific aspects that define PPSL, (b) perceived effects of PPSL on student counselors' overall development, and (c) comparisons of PPSL and practicum training.

Further research of graduate-level service-learning was recommended, particularly studies that reflect an appreciation of ways that undergraduate service-learning research informs and does not inform service-learning in graduate training. It was also suggested that future research examine other models of PPSL in graduate counselor education in order to appreciate the various ways that PPSL can be conceptualized and practiced.

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CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Statement of Problem

Service-learning is an approach to teaching and learning that aspires to integrate student service in community or school settings with academic coursework in order to meet educational and community goals (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996). This pedagogy, or method of instruction, has been evaluated and carried out across various undergraduate disciplines, such as education (e.g., Barton, 2000; Boyle-Baise & Sleeter, 2000; Dreuth & Dreuth-Fewell, 2002), psychology (e.g., Hardy & Schaen, 2000; Pezdek, 2002), communication (e.g., Souza, 1999), and political science (e.g., Markus, Howard, & King, 1993). The current study examined the use of service-learning with graduate students where there has been little research.

According to recent reports (Campus Compact, 2002; Gray, Ondaatje, & Zakaras, 1999), service-learning implementation is on the rise in institutions of higher education across the country. One undergraduate psychology professor who incorporated service-learning said, "[Service-learning] allows [students] to encounter a part of themselves that transforms them into more aware, decent, caring, and effective citizens" (Johnson, 1998, p. 150). Research studies to date generally support Johnson's contention. Service-learning participation has been shown to be positively related to undergraduate students': (a) self-understanding (Knapp & Stubblefield, 2000), (b) tendency to give priority to social justice issues, (c) belief that they are connected to the community (Eyler, Giles, & Braxton, 1997), and (d) insight into the value of service to the community (Swick & Rowls, 2000). Service-learning has also been positively linked to academic and

professional outcomes, such as undergraduate students' abilities to express complex understandings of course material (Hesser, 1995) and undergraduate students' understanding of service recipients with whom they will be working after the completion of their training (Knapp & Stubblefield, 2000).

Service-learning, as it has been defined and practiced in undergraduate programs, seems amenable to graduate counselor education programs. First, service-learning appears to be aligned with counseling's values (Howard, 1992), mission (American Counseling Association [ACA], 2002), and ethics (American Psychological Association [APA], 2002). Moreover, service-learning seems to be a pedagogy that is consistent with recent calls for changes to graduate counselor education programs that encourage community partnerships (House & Sears, 2002) and social responsibility (Hackney, 1991).

A few graduate counselor education programs implement pre-practicum pedagogies that aspire to meet many of the same objectives as service-learning. Examples of such programs include: Canisius College (Lenhardt, 1994) and Oregon State University (Osborne & Collison, 1998). There are six graduate counseling programs that publicly documented their implementation of pre-practicum service-learning (PPSL). Graduate counselor education programs include: University of New Mexico (Arman & Scherer, 2002; Barbee, Scherer, & Combs, 2003), Stetson University (Burnett, Hamel, & Long, 2004), University of Wisconsin-River Falls (Russo & Matchette, 1998), University of South Florida (Baggerly, 2003), and University of Iowa (Woodard & Lin, 1999). Graduate counseling psychology programs include Boston College (Kenny & Gallagher, 2000). Subsequent correspondences with specific counseling faculty members at these

academic institutions provided evidence that PPSL as it is defined in the present study is no longer carried out at Boston College (M. Kenny, personal communication, March 27, 2004) nor at University of Wisconsin-River Falls (T. Russo, personal communication, March 26, 2004).

To date, there are only three published empirical studies (Arman & Scherer, 2002; Barbee et al., 2003; Burnett et al., 2004) of PPSL in graduate counselor education. Two of the three studies originated from University of New Mexico. Findings from Barbee et al. indicated that participating in PPSL had a significant positive relationship with student counselor self-efficacy and a significant negative relationship with student counselor anxiety. In Arman and Scherer's study, four themes emerged regarding student counselors' perspectives of PPSL in school settings. The themes were: (a) site supervisors were supportive, but needed clearer guidelines, (b) PPSL was an effective method of preparing student counselors, (c) PPSL increased student counselors' awareness of school counselors' roles and realities, and (d) student counselors wanted more class time to talk about their PPSL experiences. The third study of PPSL in graduate counselor education was carried out by Burnett et al. (2004) at Stetson University. Using quantitative and qualitative data gathered from student participants and agency supervisors, Burnett et al. found that PPSL exposed student counselors to individuals from diverse populations and enhanced student counselors' awareness of themselves in relation to others. Findings from Burnett et al. also suggested that student counselors perceived the course in which they participated in service-learning to be facilitative to the development of their multicultural competency.

Although Arman and Scherer (2002), Barbee et al. (2003), and Burnett et al. (2004) provided some evidence of the potential value of PPSL in graduate counselor education, some important gaps still remain. Missing from these investigations is a comprehensive description of the specific aspects that define PPSL as part of graduate counselor training. These studies are also limited in that they failed to explore the wide range of influences that PPSL can have on student counselors' overall development. Finally, while Arman and Scherer and Barbee et al.'s introduction sections defined PPSL as distinct from practicum training, neither study was an actual examination of PPSL participants' perspectives of the two training methods. The present study addressed these gaps by using interviews and document review to explore PPSL in a graduate counselor education program. The purpose of the present study was to articulate a thorough description of PPSL in the context of graduate counselor education in order to identify: (a) the perceived effects (or lack of effect) of PPSL on student counselors' overall development and (b) the way PPSL participants compare PPSL to practicum training.

A single-case study was chosen because it focuses on the phenomenon of interest, namely the use of PPSL in graduate counselor education, rather than attempting to identify and describe differences between cases (Maxwell, 1996). A particular university was selected because members of its graduate counselor education program described and publicly documented field-based pre-practicum activities as service-learning and because PPSL at this particular university appeared to be consistent with this study's definition of service-learning in graduate training. To ensure confidentiality, the university will be referred to as Monroe University throughout this manuscript. Other

pseudonyms will also be used to refer to people, places, and programs affiliated with Monroe University.

As mentioned previously, only three empirical investigations exist of the use of PPSL in graduate counselor education (Arman & Scherer, 2002; Barbee et al., 2003; Burnett et al., 2004). The limited amount of research in this area indicated the need for further investigation. The present study was exploratory in nature and guided by the following research questions:

1. From the perspective of recent alumni of the counselor education master's program at Monroe University (MU), what are the specific aspects that define pre-practicum service-learning (PPSL) within the counselor education master's program at MU?
2. From the perspective of counselor educators at MU, what are the specific aspects that define PPSL within the counselor education master's program at MU?
3. From the perspective of counselor education doctoral students at MU who coordinate PPSL carried out by student counselors, what are the specific aspects that define PPSL within the counselor education master's program at MU?
4. From the perspective of recent alumni of the counselor education master's program at MU, does PPSL affect the overall development of student counselors? If so, how are those effects described and understood?
5. From the perspective of counselor educators at MU, does PPSL affect the overall development of student counselors? If so, how are those effects described and understood?

6. From the perspective of counselor education doctoral students at MU who coordinate PPSL carried out by student counselors, does PPSL affect the overall development of student counselors? If so, how are those effects described and understood?
7. From the perspective of recent alumni of the counselor education master's program at MU, is PPSL different from practicum training at MU? If so, how are the differences described and understood?
8. From the perspective of counselor educators at MU, is PPSL different from practicum training at MU? If so, how are the differences described and understood?

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

Service-Learning

Service-learning has come to mean many different things to different constituencies. It has also been called upon to achieve a variety of objectives. To some, service-learning is conceptualized as a pedagogical tool that functions as a "critical learning complement to the academic goals of the course" (Howard, 1998, p. 21). Accordingly, the goal of service-learning is to rectify the shortcomings of traditional information-dissemination approaches to educating students. Others emphasize the benefits of service-learning to the development of citizenry and democratic ideals among students. For example, Mendel-Reyes (1998) and Rhoads (2000) viewed service-learning as a pedagogy for citizenship that can help strengthen participants' understanding of democracy and commitment to the community. There are also some people who focus on the personal, interpersonal, and professional components of the service-learning experience. To these practitioners and researchers of service-learning (e.g., Reittinger & Schwabbauer, 2002), the goal of service-learning is to equip participants with useful skills for work and for everyday life.

Sigmon (1997) reflected an effort to encapsulate diverse service-learning frameworks and objectives. Sigmon proposed a typology that placed field-based experiential education programs into four broad categories: (a) service-LEARNING, (b) SERVICE-learning, (c) service learning, and (d) SERVICE-LEARNING. Sigmon distinguished these forms of field-based experiential education in the following ways.

1. Service-LEARNING: learning goals primary; service goals secondary
2. SERVICE-learning: service goals primary; learning goals secondary
3. Service-learning: service and learning goals completely separate
4. SERVICE-LEARNING: service and learning goals of equal weight and each enhances the other for all participants

Even with the differences in how service-learning is conceptualized, it is fundamentally an experiential learning strategy that blends academic learning and community service. Prentice and Garcia (2000) described service-learning as "a reciprocal relationship in which service reinforces and strengthens the learning and learning reinforces and strengthens the service" (p. 20). Similarly, Howard (1998) described service-learning as "synergistic" in that the students' service experiences are compatible and integrated with their academic learning (p. 21). Bringle and Hatcher (1996) defined service-learning as:

> A course-based, credit-bearing educational experience in which students participate in an organized service activity in such a way that meets identified community needs, and reflect on the service activity in such a way to gain further understanding of course content, a broader appreciation of the discipline, and an enhanced sense of civic responsibility. (p. 222)

Bringle and Hatcher's (1996) definition is commonly used in the service-learning literature (e.g., Gujarathi & McQuade, 2002; Waskiewicz, 2001) and it reflects the idea of service-learning as dually emphasizing educational and community goals. The following sections shed further light on service-learning by addressing: (a) elements of service-learning, (b) various forms of service-learning in undergraduate education, (c) the

link between the ideas of John Dewey and service-learning, (d) the history of service-learning, and (e) service-learning's relationship to undergraduate student development.

Elements of Service-Learning

Reflection and reciprocity are generally considered core elements of service-learning. The reflective component is undertaken by students and generally facilitated by instructors. It involves the thoughtful consideration of service in order to promote student learning and development (Jacoby, 1996). Reflection can take many forms, such as: (a) journaling, (b) small or large group discussion, or (c) in-class activity. Regardless of its specific form, reflection is usually considered a critical component to the service-learning process (Eyler, 2001). In a study of service-learning outcomes, Steinke, Fitch, Johnson, and Waldstein (2002) found that simply introducing students to diversity via service-learning without working through, or reflecting on, their reactions can at best produce no effect and at worst create damage by reinforcing students' negative stereotypes of the community groups with which they interact.

The second core component of service-learning, reciprocity, speaks to the way the service component is planned and carried out. The idea underlying reciprocity is that all parties (i.e., students, community members, and instructors) are learners and assist in determining what is to be learned (Jacoby, 1996). Reciprocity, thus, can help to: (a) ensure that the service addresses community needs, (b) promote a sense of community belonging on the part of students, and (c) empower service recipients by giving them a voice in the process (Jacoby).

Undergraduate Service-Learning

Just as service-learning has been diversely conceptualized, it has also been diversely implemented and practiced within undergraduate programs (Eyler, 2002). Heffernan (2001) classified service-learning into six categories. In doing so, Heffernan helped to elucidate the many permutations of undergraduate service-learning.

The first form of service-learning described by Heffernan (2001) is *"pure" service-learning*. Like most service-learning, "pure" service-learning involves direct service to the community by students. The unique feature of "pure" service-learning is that its academic focus is the idea of community service by engaged citizens. An example of "pure" service-learning might be students providing service in underprivileged neighborhoods while also reading and discussing articles that speak to concepts like civic engagement and social responsibility.

Discipline-based service-learning is the second type of service-learning described by Heffernan (2001). In this version of service-learning, students participate in community service and use discipline-specific course content as a lens through which to reflect upon and understand their experiences. As an example, psychology students might provide after-school tutoring to middle-school students and reflect on their experiences in a way that informs how they think about learning theories.

The third form of service-learning, *problem-based service-learning*, entails students working with community members to understand a particular need and relating to the community as a consultant would a client. This version presumes that students have knowledge and/or skills from which to draw upon to make recommendations or help solve a community problem (Heffernan, 2001). For instance, health students might design

a plan to encourage healthier eating habits among school-aged children after talking with elementary students about what they eat before and after school.

The fourth type of service-learning, the *capstone experience,* described by Heffernan (2001) can incorporate discipline-based and/or problem-based service-learning features. However, what seems to separate capstone experiences from the previously noted forms of service-learning is that capstone experiences occur late in undergraduate training and thus, students may have more to offer the community. Typically, capstone service-learning experiences are offered only to students in their final year of undergraduate training. Students draw upon previously obtained knowledge and combine it with community service. The objectives of these capstone experiences are to help students synthesize their understanding of the discipline and to smooth students' transition to the professional world. For example, senior students in communication might work in conjunction with service recipients and staff members at a community organization to develop interpersonal communication training for incoming volunteers.

The fifth type of service-learning, the *service internship,* can also share features with discipline-based and/or problem-based service-learning. However, service internship experiences require a great deal more time with a community organization or school than the other forms of service-learning. Service internships require 10 to 20 hours per week compared to other forms of service-learning that require 10 to 20 hours per semester. Service internship students are usually responsible for creating a product that has value to the community or to a particular site. Heffernan (2001) explained that service internship experiences can be distinguished from traditional undergraduate internships in their inclusion of regular and on-going reflection with peers or faculty advisors. Service

internships are further distinguished from traditional undergraduate internships by their focus on reciprocity between students and community members (Heffernan). An example of a service internship might be a computer science student who interns at a resource center for underserved populations, develops a user-friendly manual for web-based job searches, and reflects on his experiences weekly with a faculty advisor.

The sixth type of service-learning is *community-based action research*. This experience is typically for students who are knowledgeable about community work. In this form of service-learning, students work with faculty members to learn research methodologies while serving as advocates for community members and community organizations (Heffernan, 2001). For instance, a pre-med student might help a faculty member design and carry out a study to assess how Spanish-speaking patients are cared for in hospital settings.

John Dewey and Service-Learning

All of the different forms of service-learning outlined by Heffernan (2001) are rooted in the educational philosophies of John Dewey (Giles & Eyler, 1994b). Dewey's intellectual contributions reflect his focus on the process of learning (rather than teaching) as well as his concern for socially applicable school knowledge. Both of these tenets seem central to service-learning. The following paragraphs explain Dewey's link to current forms of service-learning.

Dewey authored many books, such as *The School and Society* (1915), *Democracy and Education* (1916), and *Problems of Men* (1946), that spoke at length about the structure and function of American schools and school systems. In these works, Dewey expressed a strong appreciation for teaching and learning processes as they were at the

time. He was also mindful of ways to reshape the educational experience so that members of the school community and society at large were more informed and less isolated.

One way in which Dewey sought to change education was by calling attention to the practice of "teaching by pouring in" (Dewey, 1916, p. 46). These practices relied on teachers acting as dispensers of information and students responding by playing the role of passive receptacles. Dewey argued that this instructional approach was ineffective because it created an educational environment in which information lacked vitality and connection. As such, students were often ill-prepared for subsequent situations and unfamiliar with the process of learning how to learn. Some modern service-learning advocates are equally as opposed to traditional, content-driven teaching practices. For example, Zlotkowski (2001) argued, "the only pedagogical certainty is that focusing on content delivery to the exclusion of all other considerations holds little prospect of meeting the needs of [students]" (p. 29). Not surprisingly, similar comments have been made by other service-learning scholars who called for pedagogies that defy outdated teaching approaches and that foster connective and meaningful student learning (e.g., Duffy & Bringle, 1998; Osborne, Weadick, & Penticuff, 1998).

To improve the state of education in the United States during the early 1900s, Dewey (1916) advocated pedagogies founded in experience. Experience, according to Dewey's conceptualization, involved an interconnected active and passive element. Dewey (1916) wrote, "On the active hand, experience is *trying*....On the passive, it is *undergoing*" (p. 163). In other words, experience is a two-part process that involves an interaction with something or someone (the active element) and then an occurrence of enduring the outcomes of that interaction (the passive element). Central to this

conception was the idea that mere activity, in and of itself, did not constitute an experience. In Dewey's eyes, an experience occurred only when there was a conscious connection between the activity and the consequences that were undergone because of the activity. Dewey's most well-known example of this point was the child who sticks his finger into a flame. Dewey maintained that, only after the child connected the finger into the flame to the painful consequences, did a true experience (or learning) take place.

The connection between action and consequence, according to Dewey (1916), was made through the process of reflection. Dewey viewed reflection as "the intentional endeavor to discover *specific* connections between something which we do and the consequences which result, so that the two become continuous" (Dewey, 1916, p. 170). In other words, reflection facilitated understanding by connecting elements of an experience. Reflection can serve a similar purpose in service-learning (Jacoby, 1996).

Without reflection, Dewey (1916) argued that human activities amounted to simple trial and error. He wrote, "We simply do something, and when it fails, we do something else, and keep trying till we hit upon something which works, and then we adopt that method as a rule of thumb measure in subsequent procedure" (p. 169-170). Dewey appears to have suggested that trial and error practices do not reveal or promote learning, but rather they indicate disregard for the interdependence between activities and outcomes.

Along with providing a conceptual guide with regards to experience and education, Dewey's influence on service-learning also seems important in terms of the role of education in addressing societal concerns. Dewey believed that that there should be a free exchange between the school and society (Edman, 1955). This message is clear

in one of his most poignant works, *Problems of Men* (Dewey, 1946). At the time he penned *Problems of Men*, the world was confronted with the daunting task of reducing tension among people and engendering peace. Dewey contended that, because the conflict would either be exacerbated or ameliorated by the ideas and efforts of people, education must play a critical part in helping to create habits that "secure the ends of peace, democracy, and economic stability" (Dewey, 1946, p. 30). As such, Dewey thought that schools had a burden to bear in promoting society's welfare. Not surprisingly, similar sentiments have been echoed more recently in the fields of education (e.g., Bringle & Hatcher, 2002) and counseling (e.g., Lewis & Arnold, 1998). For example, in a work examining how professional counselors can address multicultural concerns, Lewis and Arnold (1998) wrote, "Despite the fact that oppression is not our fault…its elimination is our responsibility" (p. 55).

Furthermore, Dewey recognized that a free interplay between school and society was not only good for the betterment of society, but it was also valuable to the process of educating and preparing students. In places where a school-society exchange was limited, Dewey believed that students missed out and consequently, that schools had failed. Dewey wrote, "The great waste in [these] school[s] comes from [the student's] inability to utilize the experiences he gets outside the school in any complete and free way within the school itself; while on the other hand, he is unable to apply in daily life what he is learning at school" (Dewey, 1915, p. 67). The present-day words of some service-learning advocates are likewise critical of educational institutions that fall short of making meaningful links between course content and their real-world applications (e.g., McCall, 1996).

To resolve the “great waste” in education, Dewey (1915) called for an organized connection between schools and communities. He maintained that these relationships should “work easily, flexibly, and fully” so as to bring coherence and unity to educational practices and processes (Dewey, 1915, p. 60). This degree of connection was critical to Dewey because it fostered his principles of what makes an experience educational: continuity and interaction. An organized school-society relationship enhanced continuity in that it helped bridge past, present, and future experiences for students. Moreover, this link between school and society spoke to Dewey’s second principle, interaction, because it facilitated transaction between the learner and the environment (Carver, 1997). When school-society unions were characterized by continuity and interaction, students could appreciate the interdependency of and make meaningful connections between in-school and out-of-school activities. This idea rings true for some proponents of service-learning (e.g., Arman & Scherer, 2002; Leeds, 1998).

A History of Service-Learning

As suggested by Dewey’s works (1915; 1916; 1946), interest in pedagogies that encourage active student participation, prepare students for social action, and bridge school-society learning experiences is not new. According to Morton and Enos (2002), the first wave of service-learning interest occurred in the 1930s as a result of educational and social reforms led by John Dewey and Jane Addams, respectively. The goals of service-learning activities at that time were to both educate students and prepare them for participation in democratic life. The second wave of interest occurred during the 1960s and early 1970s in response to the sociopolitical unrest generated by the Vietnam War and the civil rights movement (Morton & Enos). Many lessons were learned from this

wave of interest, including the value of (a) integrating service-learning into the central mission and goals of the institution in which it is housed, (b) establishing reciprocity among service providers and recipients, and (c) ensuring that significant learning and effective service were indeed taking place (Jacoby, 1996). The third and most recent wave of service-learning interest appears to be guided by a purposeful approach to service-learning implementation (Honnet & Poulsen, 1989). This wave came about because of the creation and growth of national organizations, such as Campus Compact and the National Society for Experiential Education, which sought to revive the ideal of service in American education (Zlotkowski, 2001). Service-learning practices today tend to emphasize academic (e.g., student learning), social (e.g., commitment to social action), and/or personal (e.g., self-concept) student outcomes (Howard, 1998). A more comprehensive history of service-learning is beyond the scope of this project and interested readers are referred to: Jacoby (1996), Pollack (1997), or Stanton, Giles, and Cruz (1999).

In light of service-learning's conceptual and applied history, it was expected that pre-practicum service-learning in the graduate counselor education program under investigation would be: (a) founded on a philosophy informed by both educational and community objectives, (b) associated with academic, personal, professional, and social variables, and (c) designed and implemented in such a way that learning and service were to some degree evenly emphasized.

Service-Learning and Undergraduate Student Development

As suggested by its history, service-learning was created in part to meet student-focused objectives. In addition, the overall success of service-learning is often attributed

to its ability to facilitate student growth. Not surprisingly, the majority of service-learning research has examined the pedagogy's relationship to areas of student development (Giles & Eyler, 1998), particularly with undergraduate students. In the present investigation, student-focused studies of service-learning were categorized into two broad areas: (a) *academic/professional development* and (b) *personal/social development*. The subsequent discussion provides a brief overview of the service-learning literature on undergraduate student development. This review will help locate a relevant set of expectations regarding the possibilities of pre-practicum service-learning as a method of training in graduate counselor education. For a more complete description of service-learning research, interested readers are referred to: Craig (1998), Eyler, Giles, Stenson, and Gray (2001), or Rama, Ravenscroft, Wolcott, and Zlotkowski (2000).

Professional/academic development. Service-learning studies of academic/professional student development examined the relationship of service-learning to areas such as course grades, appreciation of work responsibilities in one's field of study, understanding of course material, application of knowledge, career planning, and critical-thinking skills. Research to date in the area of academic/professional student development and service-learning has indicated mixed results.

Hesser (1995) studied faculty perceptions of the extent to which service-learning enabled students to achieve liberal arts learning outcomes (e.g., improved problem-solving skills) and understand key course concepts. Forty-eight faculty members from five different higher education institutions and 16 different disciplines participated in the study. Using data gathered from a questionnaire, Hesser found that nearly three-quarters (74%) of the faculty involved in the study perceived service-learning to either "very

extensively" or "extensively" contribute to students' critical thinking/analytical skills. In addition, over half of the faculty (54%) responded that service-learning either "very extensively" or "extensively" improved students' problem-solving skills. Focus group interviews with participants also revealed that faculty perceived service-learning to aid in students' capacity to understand and apply course material. However, Hesser's findings were not altogether positive with respect to academic/professional outcomes. For example, less than half of the faculty involved perceived service-learning to "very extensively" or "extensively" improve students' written and oral communication skills. Moreover, on all four academic/professional student outcomes, at least one-quarter of the faculty responded that service-learning only "somewhat" contributed to student development.

Hesser's (1995) study points toward the merits and limitations of service-learning in the eyes of service-learning faculty. It also raises questions about the use of service-learning faculty to evaluate service-learning's impact on student outcomes. While service-learning faculty are positioned well to assess learning outcomes, they may also have a vested interest in promoting a pedagogy that they believe is valuable. Thus, it is possible that Hesser's faculty respondents overvalued the influence of service-learning in some areas and/or underreported some of the ways in which service-learning fails to meet certain student objectives either because the faculty did not perceive those limitations or did not want to acknowledge them. However, given that Hesser's results were not overwhelmingly positive along all areas of student development, it could also be the case that this particular group of service-learning faculty honestly evaluated service-learning's

various impacts, which led to some competing findings within and across outcome variables.

In another study of service-learning's relationship to academic/professional student outcomes, Batchelder and Root (1994) compared the written responses of 48 students in service-learning courses and 48 students in non-service-learning courses taught by the same instructors. All participants were asked to write for 30 minutes about how they would respond to situations where they were cast in the role of a public authority. Students completed this task during the first week and again during the last week of the term. The written responses were scored along eight dimensions of thinking about social problems. Service-learning students also submitted journal entries that were used to assess occupational exploration and investment. Data analysis indicated that participation in service-learning courses had a meaningful influence on three dimensions of thinking about social problems: (a) the number of dimensions from which students viewed the situation, (b) the number of subgroups (e.g., writing about physical and emotional abuse rather than abuse generally), and (c) students' statement of resolve to act despite uncertainty. However, the reach of service-learning's influence was not shown to extend to all dimensions of thinking about social problems assessed in the study. In addition, an analysis of service-learning students' journal entries provided evidence that the service-learning experience did not significantly predict students' occupation-related thinking (e.g., re-examination of the positive and negative aspects of a career).

In a larger study of academic/professional student outcomes including over 1300 students at 28 higher education institutions, Gray et al. (1999) found that, in comparison to non-service-learning students, service-learning students did not report more

improvement in writing, quantitative reasoning, or analytic thinking. Moreover, service-learning students were no more likely than their non-service-learning counterparts to report that a course incorporating service-learning helped them to clarify their major or make career plans. In another large-scale study of service-learning, Eyler et al. (1997) asked undergraduate service-learning students (n = 1140) and non-service-learning students (n = 404) to fill out a survey prior to and after their respective courses. Eyler et al. (1997) did not find a meaningful relationship between undergraduate students' participation in service-learning and students' assessment critical of thinking skills.

However, other studies exploring the relationship between service-learning and academic/professional student development have yielded findings indicating a positive and meaningful link (e.g., Markus et al., 1993; Swick & Rowls, 2000). For example, in a study of 240 undergraduate education students using qualitative and quantitative analysis, Swick and Rowls (2000) found that pre-service teachers perceived service-learning to enhance their competencies in career exploration and the attainment of specific instructional skills. Swick and Rowls also found that 90% of the pre-service teachers in their study believed that participating in service-learning had strengthened their professional relationship skills and that they had "gained skill in how to function as professional educators in different settings with children from diverse backgrounds" (p. 466). These findings are not unlike those reported in Markus et al (1993). Markus et al. found that service-learning students were significantly more likely than non-service-learning students to report that they "learned to apply principles from this course to new situations" and "developed a set of overall values in this field" (p. 415).

Personal/social development. A second area in which service-learning studies have focused is the relationship between undergraduate service-learning and personal/social student development. Areas of personal/social student development include: self-concept, citizenship values, appreciation of community needs, intention to serve others in need, tolerance of others, self- and other-knowledge, and understanding of diversity issues. Giles and Eyler (1994a) studied the impact of service-learning on 72 undergraduate students who took part in a service-learning experience as a requirement for a major in human and organizational development. The majority of the students were female, Caucasian, and first- or second-year students. Giles and Eyler (1994a) assessed personal values and social responsibility by analyzing pre-post data from: (a) a questionnaire composed of scales from Markus et al. (1993) and (b) students' responses to open-ended questions about client groups, learning expectations, and perceptions of outcomes for themselves and clients. The results indicated a shift over the course of the service-learning experience in how students viewed the clients they served and the importance students' attributed to community involvement. Students' responses prior to and after service-learning were notably different in that students' post-experience responses suggested: (a) a change in students' view of the causes of personal hardship of service recipients, (b) an intent by students to fulfill leadership roles in the community, and (c) more personal responsibility for helping to create social change. Despite these positive findings, there was not a significant difference between students' responses before and after service-learning with regard to students' belief that they could personally make a difference in their community. The lack of difference in this case may have been due to a number of different reasons. One explanation is that students' time in the

community as service-learners allowed them to experience the struggles associated with making meaningful systemic changes in a community, and these resulting experiences and insights affected students' perceptions of how effective they could be in making community-wide changes. While this study helped to shed light on the service-learning's relationship with potential important personal/social student outcomes, there was a notable drawback—the absence of random assignment and a non-service-learning control group.

This problem was addressed in a study by Markus et al. (1993). Markus et al. studied the impact of service-learning on 89 undergraduate students enrolled in a course titled "Contemporary Political Issues." Two of the eight sections of the course were randomly designated as service-learning sections. The remaining six sections served as control groups, utilizing a traditional format of class discussion and lecture. At the beginning and end of the course, students completed a self-administered questionnaire about their sociopolitical beliefs and values. The results indicated that service-learning students reported significant increases in their ratings of items reflecting the personal importance of working to help people in need and creating equal opportunities for all people. Similar increases were not found among students enrolled in the control groups. Other small-scale (e.g., Kretchmar, 2001; Swick & Rowls, 2000) and large-scale studies (e.g., Eyler, et al., 1997; Gray et al., 1999) provided further evidence of the positive meaningful relationship between undergraduate service-learning and students' personal/social growth, including students' reports that they will continue to do volunteer work and take an active role in addressing social problems.

However, not all undergraduate students are personally or socially transformed by the service-learning experience. Boyle-Baise and Sleeter (2000) studied the use of community-based service-learning in multicultural education courses for pre-service teachers. Using data gathered from reflection papers and small group interviews of 117 pre-service teachers, Boyle-Baise and Sleeter concluded that: (a) social activism was only minimally fostered and (b) pre-service teachers with limited prior diversity experiences may only partially confront previously held stereotypes of youth of color and/or youth in poverty. Jones (2002), in her position piece on the underside of service-learning, echoed Boyle-Baise and Sleeter's findings. Jones explained that some students who participate in service-learning do not: (a) change their beliefs about the value of helping others or (b) modify their perceptions of the community members they serve. Jones contended that because of various interrelated factors, such as students' developmental readiness and the ability of instructors to facilitate reflection of complex issues, there are students who do not experience the anticipated personal/social benefits of service-learning. Jones' analysis identified some of the factors that complicate the potential success of service-learning as a pedagogy incorporated with undergraduate students.

The body of service-learning literature reviewed above suggests that service-learning can have value as a method of instruction for undergraduate students. Service-learning has been found to be meaningfully related to academic/professional (e.g., Swick & Rowls, 2000) and personal/social (e.g., Markus et al., 1993) student outcomes. At the same time, the literature also demonstrates that service-learning is not universally effective. Some objectives are achieved during service-learning while others remain

partially fulfilled or unaddressed. Similarly, some students benefit from carrying out service-learning, whereas other students do not.

The extant literature of undergraduate service-learning guided the current study in two important ways. First, as explored in previous studies, this study incorporated the broad range of impacts service-learning could have on student participants. Second, the present study moved beyond a focus on whether service-learning was effective to include a description and understanding of the elements that contributed to its perceived successes or failures.

Service-Learning in Graduate Training

Much of what is known and asserted about service-learning is based on how the pedagogy is defined and implemented in undergraduate training. Given that most service-learning takes place in undergraduate education (Zlotkowski, 2000), this is not altogether surprising. However, possibly because of the growing body of evidence indicating service-learning's educational and social benefits, service-learning is slowly finding its way into graduate training. Graduate disciplines carrying out service-learning in some form include: counseling (e.g., Arman & Scherer, 2002; Kenny & Gallagher, 2000), medicine (e.g., Logsdon & Ford, 1998; Reittinger & Schwabbauer, 2002), communication (e.g., Crabtree, 1999; Perkins, Kidd, & Smith, 1999), and gerontology (e.g., Thomas, Reigart, & Trickey, 1998).

Because of graduate students' developed knowledge base and skill set, it has been argued that they have more to offer in terms of service to the community than undergraduate service-learning students (Perkins et al., 1999). An examination of service-learning across graduate disciplines provides some evidence to support the claim by

Perkins et al. Seemingly more so than their undergraduate counterparts, graduate service-learning students are: (a) granted autonomy and authority in service settings, (b) called upon to design and carry out broad-based interventions, and (c) asked to conduct service that is informed by discipline-specific practices and knowledge. Yet despite these differences from undergraduate service-learning, most of the service-learning activities engaged in by graduate students can be situated within Heffernan's (2001) undergraduate forms of service-learning. Unless otherwise specified, the graduate service-learning practices examined in the subsequent discussion occurred outside the context of practicum training.

"Pure" service-learning, as described by Heffernan (2001), appears to be rare in graduate training. As indicated previously, "pure" service-learning involves direct community service by students and an intellectual emphasis on ideas such as volunteerism and civic engagement. At the graduate level, this form of service-learning may be rare because the curriculum is typically driven by pedagogies centering on discipline-specific perspectives and competencies rather than themes of community service (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998).

A literature review revealed that *discipline-based service-learning* is more commonly practiced than "pure" service-learning in graduate programs across the country. This form of service-learning allows students to discuss and interpret their service experiences through the conceptual lenses of their discipline. An example of discipline-based service-learning at the graduate level occurred at Spalding University where nursing students performed a wide variety of service activities (e.g., teaching health safety to grade school children, answering telephones for community hotlines, and

presenting educational programs about organ donation) and reflected on their experiences through the framework of caring, which is a central concept in the field of nursing (Logsdon & Ford, 1998). Similarly, some graduate counselor education students at University of Wisconsin-River Falls carried out service activities in a variety of settings (e.g., schools, churches, and nursing homes) and reflected on their experiences through the lens of Bronfenbrenner's (1989) social ecological theory (Russo & Matchette, 1998).

Problem-based service-learning, another of Heffernan's (2001) forms of service-learning, has also been conducted in graduate training programs. However, at the graduate level, it appears that students are typically asked to move beyond making recommendations for community change (as in many of the undergraduate versions of problem-based service-learning), and called upon to design and implement broad-based interventions. For example, within one medical school, first-year medical students served underserved populations and worked to carry out educational projects designed to improve certain community members' overall health (Reittinger & Schwabbauer, 2002). At Boston College, some doctoral counseling psychology students took part in service-learning by modifying and implementing an after-school program at an urban elementary school (Kenny & Gallagher, 2000).

With *community-based action research* (Heffernan, 2001), graduate students seem to be granted greater autonomy than their undergraduate counterparts. While undergraduate students often work closely with faculty members while carrying out such research, graduate students are allowed to develop research questions and carry out studies more independently. For example, in one graduate communication studies course, students provided service at various sites (e.g., a nursing home or a homeless shelter),

developed research questions, and conducted qualitative studies connecting their service experiences to communication theory and/or research. Some of the students then passed along their final reports to community agencies so that organizational members could better meet the needs of service recipients (Perkins et al., 1999).

Capstone experiences and service internships, other forms of undergraduate service-learning described by Heffernan (2001), share features with practica—a method of training used in applied graduate disciplines (e.g., counseling and nursing). Similar to capstone experiences and service internships, graduate-level practicum experiences are intended for more advanced students and involve "practice through service in an applied community setting, learning through service, and development through reflection" (Fisher & Finkelstein, 1999, p. 395). However, according to Fisher and Finkelstein, not all practica are designed to reflect a balance between service and learning. Thus, not all practica qualify as service-learning (Fisher & Finkelstein). For example, in graduate-level counseling, Kenny and Gallagher (2000) claimed that traditional practicum training emphasizes student-focused learning objectives (e.g., clinical competencies and professional socialization) more so than service-related goals (e.g., commitment to public service and personal responsibility for helping create social change). Support for Kenny and Gallagher's position can be found in a study by Bradley and Fiorini (1999). Bradley and Fiorini designed a questionnaire to identify what competencies counselor educators expected student counselors to achieve by the completion of their practicum experience. Knowledge and skills that are central to service to the community and social action were not components of the questionnaire, whereas clinically-focused competencies such as

"demonstrate basic listening skills," "demonstrate the ability to reflect feeling and meaning with clients," and "demonstrate appropriate case documentation" were present.

Heffernan's (2001) classification system does not account for all service-learning practices in graduate training. At University of New Mexico and University of South Florida, some counselor education graduate students were taking part in pre-practicum service-learning activities that provided a service to community members, but that appeared to be more heavily focused on equipping students with discipline-specific skills that may be of use during subsequent practicum or internship experiences. At University of New Mexico, for example, counselor education graduate students could opt to conduct supervised one-on-one counseling with a client or co-facilitate a group experience as part of their pre-practicum service-learning activities (Arman & Scherer, 2002). At University of South Florida, some graduate counselor education students carried out play therapy with children during pre-practicum service-learning (Baggerly, 2003). Similar service-learning practices have taken place in graduate-level psychology (Stadtlander, 2002) and graduate-level gerontology (Thomas et al., 1998). For the purposes of this study, these service-learning activities are referred to as *community-based pre-practicum training*.

Service-Learning and Graduate Counselor Education

Definitional Issues

In light of current service-learning practices in graduate training, Heffernan's (2001) forms of service-learning, and Bringle and Hatcher's (1996) definition of service-learning, *graduate-level service-learning* for the current study was defined as:

> A course-based, credit-bearing educational experience that occurs outside the context of practicum training in which students (a) participate in service to

communities or schools and (b) reflect on their service to achieve a variety of outcomes.

In addition, unless otherwise specified, the broad terms counselor and counseling were used in the present study. A counselor refers to a professional who has received at least master's level training in one or more of counseling's areas of specialization (e.g., school counseling, community counseling, or counselor education). A student counselor is someone who is undergoing master's level training in an area of counseling. Counseling is defined as "the application of mental health, psychological or human development principles, through cognitive, affective, behavioral or systemic interventions, strategies that address wellness, personal growth, or career development, as well as pathology," as adopted by the Governing Council of the ACA in 1997 (ACA, 1997, ¶ 2). The case for using the general term counseling in the current study was based upon: (a) the common curricular experiences required by master's level students across counseling's specializations (Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs [CACREP], 2001), (b) the presence of counseling's various specializations in a shared educational domain (i.e., schools of education), and (c) the potential applicability of pre-practicum service-learning to the development of all student counselors.

Service-Learning Integration in Graduate Counselor Education

Unlike content-focused graduate programs, graduate counselor education typically includes practica and internships as a central part of students' training (Kenny & Gallagher, 2000). Because field-based training activities are already part of the graduate counselor education curriculum, the need for service-learning might be less clear than in content-focused graduate programs. Moreover, in applied graduate programs such as

counselor education, it might be difficult to ascertain how service-learning is different from other field-based training activities. As an example of this point, at University of South Florida (Baggerly, 2003), a blurry line seemed to exist between student counselors' experiences as service-learners and typical practicum activities.

Despite the potential overlap between service-learning and other field-based pedagogies, a few graduate counselor education programs claim to have incorporated service-learning as a distinctive part of their training. These programs are located at University of New Mexico, Stetson University, University of Wisconsin-River Falls, University of South Florida, and University of Iowa. Outside of these examples, there is not much information or research about other graduate counselor education programs that may be implementing service-learning into their curricula. There are at least two possible lines of thinking, as proposed by this author, for why this is the case.

The first line of thinking for why there is little information or research about service-learning integration in graduate counselor education is simply that service-learning is not being carried out to a significant extent in this field. One plausible explanation for why service-learning is apparently rare in graduate counselor education is that the body of relevant service-learning and graduate counselor training literature does not clearly distinguish service-learning from practicum training. As a result, many graduate counselor education programs: (a) may believe that they are already carrying out service-learning by incorporating practicum training and/or (b) may not realize that service-learning can be employed as a distinct pre-practicum training method. Other possible explanations for why service-learning is not being carried out to a significant extent in graduate counselor education are: (a) there are conflicting findings regarding the

effects of service-learning on students (e.g., Eyler & Giles, 1999; Gray et al., 1999), (b) service-learning research—some of which has been criticized because of its lack of rigor (Eyler, 2002)—does not carry enough weight to persuade graduate counseling education programs to incorporate service-learning into the curricula, and (c) there may be too little room to integrate service-learning into an already crowded graduate counselor education curriculum.

The second line of thinking for why there is little information or research about service-learning integration in graduate counselor education is that the term service-learning is rarely used to describe pre-practicum activities in graduate counselor education that incorporate field-based experiences. In the place of service-learning, some graduate counselor education programs may use other terms to describe pre-practicum pedagogies that aspire to meet educational and community objectives, such as the social advocacy model at Oregon State University (Osborne & Collison, 1998) and collaborative partnerships at Canisius College (Lenhardt, 1994). Given this conceptual landscape, generative discussions and research about service-learning may be more difficult to conduct and thus less likely to occur.

Although there is not much information or research about service-learning integration in graduate counselor education, the philosophies and practices of service-learning at the undergraduate level suggests that this pedagogy may fit the counseling discipline and graduate counselor training. The subsequent sections will highlight: (a) traditions and core beliefs within psychology that are consistent with aspects of service-learning related to social action, (b) counseling's missions and values that align with socially active elements of service-learning, (c) social responsibility among counseling

professionals, and (d) research suggesting that pre-practicum service-learning has some potential value as a method of training in graduate counselor education.

Psychology and the Public

Counseling is shaped in large part by psychology's principles, ethics, and customs. Accordingly, in order to understand the potential fit of service-learning to counseling, it is important to acknowledge and understand psychology's traditions as well as the relationship between psychology and the public.

It can be said that an interdependent relationship exists between psychology and the public. Psychology enhances the public welfare by working to understand human nature and by reaching out to help people in need (Mesibov, 1999). At the same time, the public can offer a great deal to the field of psychology by providing a natural laboratory for psychologists to study theories of human nature and to understand the ways in which the social context shapes members of the society. Hence, each arm of this relationship needs the other to foster its evolution.

Psychology's commitment to public involvement is reflected by recommendations from within the discipline for professionals to use psychology for the advancement of society. In 1969, for example, former APA president George Miller (1969) urged his colleagues to discover how to give psychology away by using their knowledge to address social issues and to promote human welfare. Miller recognized, as others have more recently (e.g., Altman, 1996; Raupp & Cohen, 1992), that the science, goals, and principles of psychology directly apply to the promotion of social change. Raupp and Cohen (1992) spoke to this issue in their discussion of how to restructure psychology's curriculum in order to further the discipline's public purpose. Raupp and Cohen called for

the integration of a new kind of public service in psychology education that is based on civic values and that "moves beyond the earlier claim that practical experiences benefit psychology students and forges a new ethos of responsibility to and connection with the community" (p. 25).

More recently, other authors have echoed this message and called for a socially responsive pedagogy within psychology training (e.g., Altman, 1996; McCall, 1996; Osborne & Collison, 1998). Altman (1996) supported a psychology curriculum based upon foundational, professional, and socially responsive knowledge. Altman's description of socially responsive knowledge is relevant to the present discussion. Altman believed socially responsive knowledge should be integral to higher education and intertwined with the other two forms of knowledge. Socially responsive knowledge, Altman claimed, adds to the learning experience by "educat[ing] students in the problems of society…hav[ing] them experience and understand first-hand social issues in their community…and most important, giv[ing] students the experience and skills to act on social problems" (pp. 374-375).

Psychology's public purpose is further explicated in the discipline's guiding code of ethics. The preamble to the APA *Ethical Principles of Psychologists and Code of Conduct* (2002) states, "[Psychologists should] strive to help the *public* in developing informed judgments and choices concerning human behavior. In doing so, they perform many roles, such as researcher, educator, diagnostician, therapist, supervisor, consultant, administrator, *social interventionist*, and expert witness [italics added]" (p. 3). Thus, the preamble directs psychologists to acknowledge and respond to public needs to promote social well-being. As well, by identifying the role of social interventionist, the preamble

communicates that psychologists have public responsibilities that extend beyond their work within the academe or the confines of their place of individual therapeutic practice. In a similar vein, Principle B of the APA's code of ethics, which speaks to aspirations of fidelity and responsibility, indicates that psychologists endeavor to be "aware of their professional and scientific responsibilities to society and to the specific communities in which they work" (p. 3).

Counseling and the Public

Counseling has a legacy of devotion to benefiting society by working to empower individuals through the promotion of intra- and interpersonal skills. The mission of the ACA affirms this commitment to the public. Specifically, its mission is to "enhance the quality of life in society by promoting the development of professional counselors, advancing the counseling profession, and using the profession and practice of counseling to promote respect for human dignity and diversity" (ACA, 2002, ¶ 2). The message of social responsibility within this mission statement is echoed in ACA's 1998 Presidential Theme of Social Action and its 1999 Presidential Theme of Advocacy. This perspective is also bolstered by several counseling scholars (e.g., Lee, 1998; Lewis & Arnold, 1998; Myers, 1998). Lee (1998), for example, said that counselors should use their skills and knowledge to "intervene not only in the lives of their clients, but also in the world around them" (p. 4).

Two studies by Howard (1992) examining the values of counseling psychologists are also relevant to this discussion because they reflect counseling's unique connection to society and social issues. Howard (1992) found that counseling psychologists endorsed core beliefs such as the importance of environment and the need to enhance awareness of

oppression. These values point toward counselors' responsibility to acknowledge the influence of systemic forces on people's lives and to confront systemic problems. Moreover, a second study conducted by Howard (1992) indicated that counseling psychologists tended to endorse counseling values significantly more highly than psychologists from a variety of other specialties. As such, the results from the two studies suggest that there are not only agreed-upon values within counseling psychology, but also that these basic commitments are more central to counseling psychologists than members of other specialties.

Along with a disciplinary mission and set of values that demonstrate a connection to social responsibility, counselors are also equipped with some skills that can be helpful in facilitating social change. For example, counselors are trained as listeners, consultants, problem-solvers, and conflict mediators (Grieger & Ponterotto, 1998). Moreover, many counselors are trained with an emphasis on multiculturalism (e.g., Arthur & Achenbach, 2002; Granello, 2000). Thus, they are likely respectful of and responsive to the unique interactions between individuals and their surrounding environment. Finally, counselors are trained as change agents. While such training is typically at the individual level, the requisite awareness, knowledge, and skill to intervene can be used to inform social action at a systemic level (Lee, 1998).

Counseling Professionals and Social Responsibility

Following their graduate training, counselors often hold professional positions where they view public needs. According to Lewis and Arnold (1998), whether it is through providing psychological care to clients, conducting research on the human experience, performing outreach and consultation, or teaching classes, the day-to-day

experiences of professional counselors allow them the opportunity to witness: (a) public concerns and (b) the processes and effects of social injustice. From this opportune position, more and more counselors are using the skills with which they have been equipped to help facilitate social change (Lee & Walz, 1998). However, there are still counselors who are "uncomfortable about adopting a socially active role, preferring to claim the neutrality and advocacy of the individual client" (Sexton & Whiston, 1998, pp. 258-259).

Today, counselors can no longer afford to be uncomfortable with or ill-prepared to facilitate social change. As suggested by Sexton and Whiston (1998), the counseling profession is entering into a new era—an era in which the role of counselor has expanded to include that of social activist. In a position piece, Kenny and Gallagher (2000) argued that service-learning can help to equip student counselors for social action by: familiarizing them with systemic factors that affect human development, affirming their commitment to social justice, and strengthening their understanding of the social problems facing community members. Thus, the use of service-learning could be beneficial to graduate counselor training.

Research Investigations of Service-Learning in Graduate Counselor Education

Empirical investigations of service-learning in graduate counselor education are few. Two of the three published studies to date focusing on the use of practicum service-learning (PPSL) as a method of training student counselors were conducted within the graduate counselor education program at University of New Mexico (Arman & Scherer, 2002; Barbee et al., 2003).

Arman and Scherer (2002) explored PPSL at University of New Mexico by using a qualitative design involving focused reflection groups, review of student participants' journals, and semi-structured individual interviews. The participants were seven female students who ranged in age from 26 to 44 years. The participants self-identified as Hispanic (2), Anglo (1), Caucasian (2), Multiracial (1), and Mexican-American (1). Four of the participants held bachelor's degrees and three held master's degrees or higher. The researchers took steps to ensure the credibility of the interpretations by: (a) triangulating the data using multiple methods and sources, (b) debriefing with a peer, and (c) keeping a reflective journal.

Four themes emerged from Arman and Scherer's (2002) analysis and interpretation of the data. Two themes spoke to the merits of PPSL. Student counselors thought that PPSL helped to bridge the gap between counseling theory and practice as well as build their awareness of school counselor roles and realities. The other two themes pointed toward areas of improvement for PPSL, specifically student supervision and the reflection experience. Some participants thought that site supervisors needed clearer directions about what was expected of them as supervisors. In addition, some participants reported that students needed more time to process service-learning experiences.

The study by Arman and Scherer (2002) suggested that PPSL could help bridge theory and practice as well as open student counselors' eyes to professional counseling responsibilities. However, these findings may not communicate the scope of the influence of PPSL. It may be useful to explore a wider range of perceived effects that PPSL can have on student counselors. In addition, Arman and Scherer's study indicated areas of

improvement for PPSL, specifically regarding supervision and reflection. However, the study did not thoroughly describe these or other components of PPSL. An examination of the diverse influences of PPSL and a comprehensive description of PPSL are important avenues of study.

The second study was also an investigation of PPSL at University of New Mexico. Barbee et al. (2003) examined the relationship between PPSL and student counselor self-efficacy and state anxiety. Barbee et al. hypothesized that PPSL would have a positive relationship with student counselor self-efficacy and a negative relationship with student counselor state anxiety, especially for student counselors with limited counselor training or counseling-related work experiences. The researchers explored this hypothesis by comparing student counselors who had participated in PPSL (n = 39) to similar student counselors who had not participated in PPSL (n = 74). The sample of student counselors who had not participated in PPSL was drawn from graduate counselor education programs at two different southwestern universities. Most of the participants were female and identified as Caucasian. To address the research questions, participants completed a demographic questionnaire, the Counselor Self-Efficacy Scale (CSES; Melchert, Hays, Wiljanen, & Kolocek, 1996), and the State-Trait Anxiety Inventory (STAI; Spielberger, Gorusch, & Lushene, 1970).

An independent samples t test (N = 113) revealed findings consistent with Barbee et al.'s (2003) hypotheses. In particular, there was a significant difference in self-efficacy as measured by the CSES between participants who took part in PPSL versus those that did not engage in PPSL ($p < .030$). Participants who carried out PPSL indicated higher levels of counselor self-efficacy. A second independent samples t test (N = 113) also fit

the expectations of Barbee et al. There was a significant difference in state anxiety levels as measured by the STAI between participants who took part in PPSL versus those that did not engage in PPSL ($p < .038$), with PPSL participants indicating lower levels of state anxiety.

Barbee et al. (2003) also conducted a multiple regression analysis to determine the unique and combined effects of three independent variables on student counselor self-efficacy. The three independent variables were: (a) availability of PPSL, (b) the amount of previous counseling work experience, and (c) the level of counselor training based on earned credits in graduate counselor education courses. The multiple regression analysis indicated that availability of PPSL, the amount of previous counseling work experience, and the level of counselor training based on earned credits in graduate counselor education courses significantly predicted counselor self-efficacy, $F(3, 107) = 16.75$, $p < .001$. Together, these variables accounted for 37% of the total variance in counselor self-efficacy. Individually, the level of counselor training accounted for almost 22% of the total variance in counselor self-efficacy, while the amount of previous counseling work experience accounted for 8.5% of the total variance. Both of these findings were significant. Meanwhile, service-learning availability accounted for only 2.5% of the total variance in counselor self-efficacy, which was not significant. However, further analysis showed a meaningful link between PPSL and counselor self-efficacy. After the outliers were removed (n =110), availability of PPSL showed a significant positive relationship with counselor self-efficacy ($p < .025$).

Based on these findings, Barbee et al. (2003) concluded that while PPSL was overshadowed by the level of counselor training and previous experience with counseling

related employment, PPSL as conceptualized and practiced at University of New Mexico might be a meaningful alternative to aid in increasing counselor self-efficacy for student counselors who have had few work- or class-related counseling experiences. However, Barbee et al.'s implication that PPSL holds potential value as a training method for student counselors warrants further exploration given that only after outliers were removed did PPSL uniquely account for a significant part of the variance in student counselor self-efficacy.

The study by Barbee et al. (2003) suggested a meaningful relationship between PPSL and important counselor variables, specifically student counselor state anxiety and self-efficacy. These findings were based on student counselor report. Missing from Barbee et al.'s investigation were the perspectives of other parties involved in the operation of PPSL, specifically PPSL coordinators and counselor educators who taught courses integrating PPSL. The perspectives of counselor educators are potentially valuable given their evaluative role with respect to student growth. The perspectives of PPSL coordinators might be important because the roles they can play in organizing and monitoring student counselors' experiences as pre-practicum service-learners. In addition, Barbee et al. defined PPSL as distinct from practicum training in graduate counselor education, but failed to explore the views of PPSL participants as a way to compare the two methods of training. These are important areas of study.

Burnett et al. (2004) carried out a more recent study of PPSL in graduate counselor education. Burnett et al. examined the use of PPSL at Stetson University within a summer course in multicultural counseling. The course met biweekly for a period of six weeks. All participants (N = 11) were enrolled in master's programs in counseling. There

were eight females and three males who ranged in age from 23 to 45 years. Ten participants identified as White and one participant identified as Hispanic.

Using quantitative and qualitative data gathered from student participants and agency supervisors, Burnett et al. (2004) examined the use of PPSL in a multicultural counseling course. Qualitative data analysis of student journals revealed that many participants had positive reactions to PPSL in that it exposed them to individuals from diverse populations and enhanced participants' awareness of themselves in relation to others. Moreover, interviews with site supervisors indicated that community members enjoyed working with PPSL participants and that the community benefited from the collaboration. However, some qualitative findings were less encouraging. For example, qualitative analysis of student journals revealed that a small number of students found PPSL to be stressful and time-consuming. Also, one site supervisor noted that it was difficult for PPSL participants to get started and that they seemed overwhelmed at the beginning of the experience.

Quantitative data were gathered using two Likert-scale surveys. The first survey was a self-performance measure completed by students that assessed: (a) basic requirements (e.g., effective use of time), (b) knowledge and learning (e.g., level of knowledge of agency population at the beginning and end of service), and (c) response to feedback/supervision (e.g., willingness to explore cultural blind spots). On a five-point Likert-scale ranging from one to five, the mean scores for all three areas were greater than or equal to 4.20, suggesting that student participants believed that they had performed well in the three areas. The second survey was also completed by student participants. It addressed perceptions of whether the format of the course helped students

enhance their multicultural competence. Using a five-point Likert-scale ranging from one to five, the mean scores to all items were greater than 4.60, suggesting that students were pleased with the format of the course and that they found the course facilitative of their multicultural competency development.

The study by Burnett et al. (2004) suggested that PPSL could be a useful training method in a multicultural counseling course. Pre-practicum service-learning encouraged students to collaborate with individuals from diverse populations, facilitate self-other awareness, and examine personal biases. However, the absence of a control group or quantitative data prior to student counselors' PPSL calls into question the strength of the case for the value of PPSL as a training method in multicultural counseling. High mean scores on the Likert-scale surveys that pointed toward the benefits of PPSL ultimately carry less weight because they cannot be compared against other potentially useful information such as: (a) student counselor data from other multicultural counseling courses that did not use PPSL, (b) assessments of student counselor participants' multicultural competency prior to carrying out PPSL, or (c) student counselor participants' self-evaluation in other graduate counseling courses.

In sum, the studies by Arman and Scherer (2002), Barbee et al. (2003), and Burnett et al. (2004) provided some evidence for the potential value of PPSL in graduate counselor training. However, these positive findings should be weighed against: (a) reports from student counselors that there were limitations to supervision and reflection components of PPSL (Arman & Scherer), (b) statistical evidence that PPSL only accounts for a significant part of the variance in student counselor self-efficacy when outliers are removed (Barbee et al.), and (c) the absence of comparative data to more

accurately assess the role of PPSL in facilitating multicultural competency development (Burnett et al.).

Moreover, these previous studies of PPSL left some important questions unanswered. Missing from these investigations is a comprehensive description of the specific aspects that define PPSL in the context of graduate counselor training. These studies are also limited in that they fail to explore the wide range of influences that PPSL can have on student counselors' overall development. Finally, while Arman and Scherer (2002) and Barbee et al. (2003) defined PPSL as distinct from practicum training in graduate counselor education, neither study examined the perspectives of PPSL participants as a way to compare the two training methods. The present study addressed these gaps by using interviews with PPSL participants (i.e., counselor educators, doctoral student coordinators, and alumni) as well as document review to explore PPSL in a graduate counselor education program. The purpose of the current study was to articulate a thorough description of PPSL in the context of graduate counselor education in order to identify: (a) the perceived effects (or lack of effect) of PPSL on student counselors' overall development and (b) the way PPSL participants compare PPSL to practicum training.

Qualitative Research Paradigm

The current study explored PPSL in a graduate counselor education program. Qualitative inquiry is well-suited to this study's purpose, as stated immediately above, because qualitative inquiry generally focuses on context and how participants understand their experiences (Maxwell, 1996). Moreover, because so little is known about the topic

under study, qualitative research can be useful when theories are not readily available and when variables cannot be easily identified (Creswell, 1998).

The rationale for using qualitative inquiry for the present study is bolstered by Ponterotto (2002). Ponterotto called qualitative research approaches the "fifth force in psychology" (p. 394) because of their relevancy to counseling research and growing momentum within counseling psychology. Ponterotto made the case for the emergence of qualitative inquiry by outlining its benefits for the study of psychology's fourth force, multiculturalism. In brief, these benefits were: (a) close contact with others to better understand and learn about the experiences of culturally diverse participants, (b) descriptions that truly reflect the experiences of participants, (c) researcher growth due to raised awareness of their own stereotypes, expectations, and privileges, and (d) dialectic interactions that can facilitate participant empowerment and investigator social activism. There is overlap between the advantages of qualitative inquiry mentioned by Ponterotto and the focus and purpose of the current study.

Qualitative and Quantitative Paradigm Dimensions

Qualitative and quantitative paradigms are typically guided by distinct worldviews and research strategies (Heppner, Kivlighan, & Wampold, 1999). Understanding these differences can provide the researcher with a more informed direction for all phases of the study (Creswell, 1994). The current section will demonstrate an appreciation of some of the dimensions upon which qualitative and quantitative forms of inquiry can be compared. It is important to note, however, that these dimensions exist along a continuum and, at times, qualitative approaches exemplify traditionally quantitative features, and vice versa.

Creswell (1994) provided an overview of five dimensions upon which qualitative and quantitative paradigm can be contrasted. The dimensions were: (a) ontological, (b) epistemological, (c) axiological, (d) rhetorical, and (e) methodological. Ontologically, the qualitative approach views reality as constructed by individuals involved with the study—the researcher, the research participants, and the readership. Comparatively, the quantitative method holds that reality is objective and independent of the individuals involved with the research. With regards to epistemology, the qualitative researcher interacts with research participants, whereas the quantitative researcher remains distant for objectivity's sake. On the axiological issue, qualitative inquiry is value-laden, while quantitative inquiry attempts to be value-free. Concerning rhetoric, the language of qualitative researchers is characterized as informal and personal, and words like "understanding" and "meaning" are employed. In contrast, quantitative researchers write more formally, and they use words like "relationship" and "comparison." Finally, methodologically, qualitative research involves inductive logic; patterns or themes emerge throughout qualitative inquiry. Comparatively, variables and theories are present before a quantitative study begins and then tested throughout via research process.

A Rationale for a Qualitative Case Study

There are several approaches within the qualitative research paradigm. Among them, there are biographies, grounded theory studies, ethnographies, and case studies. Each of these research traditions is distinct in focus and methodology. For example, while a biography explores the life of an individual using primarily interviews and personal documents, an ethnography mainly employs extended observations to describe and interpret cultural behaviors (Schwandt, 2001).

A case study is “an examination of a specific phenomenon such as a department, an event, a person, a process, an institution, or a social group” (Merriam, 1988, p. 9). As suggested by this definition, case studies aim to develop an in-depth analysis of a particular phenomenon. Given this study’s purpose to articulate a thorough description of PPSL in a graduate counselor education program, a case study design is appropriate. In addition, a qualitative case study design is advantageous for the present study because it provides a detailed analysis of a rarely studied phenomenon (Yin, 1989), namely the integration of PPSL in graduate counselor education.

Several studies of service-learning in higher education employed qualitative case study designs (e.g., Amtmann, Evans, & Powers, 2002; Barton, 2000; Boyle-Baise & Sleeter, 2000; Dunlap, 1998). Using one-on-one interviews (e.g., Amtmann et al.), document reviews (e.g., Dunlap), small group interviews (e.g., Barton; Boyle-Baise & Sleeter), and/or participant observation (e.g., Barton), some qualitative case studies of undergraduate service-learning have explored participants’ service-learning experiences in detail and offered descriptions of the meanings participants made of service-learning activities. However, the extant literature on service-learning in graduate-level counseling (Arman & Scherer, 2002; Barbee et al., 2003; Kenny & Gallagher, 2000) has not clearly addressed the defining aspects of PPSL in this context or whether PPSL is distinguishable from practicum training.

A further rationale for the use of a qualitative case study approach is in light of light of the strong link between what the qualitative research process entails and the researcher’s personal perspectives and skills. In order to provide a holistic and full picture of a phenomenon, as qualitative research seeks to do, the researcher must be willing and

able to ask questions from which a novel meaning can be derived. The researcher's teaching and clinical experiences are helpful in this regard because he is not only familiar with how to elicit meaning-relevant data via interview, but he is also skilled in perceiving and making sense of data. The second point of overlap between a qualitative case study design and the researcher's skills and perspectives is the process of data collection. In qualitative research, the researcher is personally involved in the method of inquiry by conducting activities such as interviewing key informants (Glesne, 1999). This type of involvement is fitting for the researcher because his training as counseling psychologist and teacher has equipped him with a number of interpersonal communication skills (e.g., active listening, appropriate self-disclosure, and reflection) and fostered his ability to build working relationships with others. Finally, qualitative research relies upon the researcher to be the primary instrument through which data is collected and analyzed (Eisner, 1998). On the one hand, the researcher has extensive experience with service-learning as a graduate student in counseling psychology and as an instructor of a counseling-related course for undergraduate education majors. In this way, the researcher has a general sense of what service-learning is like in action. In addition, the researcher's training as a counseling psychologist, which has included clinical supervision and self-reflection, has compelled him to understand when and to what degree his views of and reactions to a situation cloud his perceptions of it. In other words, the researcher considers himself a trustworthy instrument through which to make sense of the incoming data.

At the same time, the researcher is an advocate of experiential learning methods and someone who has had many positive service-learning experiences as a student and

instructor. The researcher's perspectives on the value of active forms of learning—service-learning in particular—posed a challenge in this qualitative investigation in that the researcher needed to be open to gathering and analyzing all data, even when the data indicated service-learning's limitations or ways in which service-learning in this particular context differed from his conceptualizations of it. In light of the researcher's previous experiences and views of service-learning, he took steps to help ensure the credibility of the entire research process. These steps will be described in the verification section.

There are also limitations to conducting a qualitative case study. The two most notable concerns of this design are related to the practicality of the findings. The first potential limitation of employing a qualitative case study approach is its emphasis on applicability over generalizability. Heppner et al. (1999) referred to applicability as "the quality of the researcher's interpretations in the context in which the qualitative investigation took place" (p. 248), and described generalizability as the degree to which the study's findings are pertinent to other settings, people, and times. Accordingly, while this study should demonstrate an appreciation of PPSL at a particular university, the comprehensive description of PPSL in this context may not hold much relevance to other graduate counselor education programs carrying out PPSL or thinking about carrying out PPSL. The second potential limitation speaks to the usefulness of the final written report. Merriam (1988) contended that, while qualitative case studies are designed to provide thick descriptions and analysis of the phenomenon under study, "the product may be deemed too lengthy, too detailed, or too involved for busy policymakers and educators to

read and use" (p. 33). Both of these limitations are noteworthy in that they are tied to possible practical implications of this study.

The research questions that guided the current study were:

1. From the perspective of recent alumni of the counselor education master's program at Monroe University (MU), what are the specific aspects that define pre-practicum service-learning (PPSL) within the counselor education master's program at MU?
2. From the perspective of counselor educators at MU, what are the specific aspects that define PPSL within the counselor education master's program at MU?
3. From the perspective of counselor education doctoral students at MU who coordinate PPSL carried out by student counselors, what are the specific aspects that define PPSL within the counselor education master's program at MU?
4. From the perspective of recent alumni of the counselor education master's program at MU, does PPSL affect the overall development of student counselors? If so, how are those effects described and understood?
5. From the perspective of counselor educators at MU, does PPSL affect the overall development of student counselors? If so, how are those effects described and understood?
6. From the perspective of counselor education doctoral students at MU who coordinate PPSL carried out by student counselors, does PPSL affect the overall development of student counselors? If so, how are those effects described and understood?

7. From the perspective of recent alumni of the counselor education master's program at MU, is PPSL different from practicum training at MU? If so, how are the differences described and understood?
8. From the perspective of counselor educators at MU, is PPSL different from practicum training at MU? If so, how are the differences described and understood?

CHAPTER III

METHOD

Case Selection

The primary purpose of the present study was to articulate a thorough description of pre-practicum service-learning (PPSL) in the context of graduate counselor education. The most important criteria for case selection in this study were that: (a) the program under study trained graduate-level student counselors, (b) the pedagogy being implemented was consistent with this study's definition of graduate-level service-learning, and (c) the pedagogy was described and publicly documented by the members of the graduate counseling program as "service-learning." Secondarily, given that gaining access is not always easy to achieve in qualitative research (Glesne, 1999), the perceived openness and responsiveness of potential participants was critical.

In light of these criteria for case selection, the graduate counselor education program at Monroe University (MU) was selected. This particular program trains graduate-level student counselors. In addition, the graduate counselor education program at MU integrates pre-practicum training methods that seemed to fit the current study's definition of graduate-level service-learning. Moreover, program documents indicated that these pre-practicum training methods are referred to as service-learning. Finally, communications with a key PPSL stakeholder at MU suggested that the researcher would have open access to PPSL practices and potential participants (C. Alston, personal communication, April 14, 2004).

Furthermore, as a study of the use of PPSL in graduate counselor training, the graduate counselor education program at MU held intrinsic value. Pre-practicum service-

learning at MU appeared unique in that it was: (a) supported by a designated program, (b) billed as integral to the training of student counselors, and (c) carried out in multiple core graduate-level counseling courses. Accordingly, in this context, it was reasonable to gather participants' perspectives because PPSL was an explicit and established part of the graduate counselor education program and because potential participants were conceivably well-suited to provide insights related to this study's research questions.

The rationale for choosing a single-case rather than a multiple-case design was two-fold. A single-case study encourages the researcher to adhere to the process of exploring and understanding the phenomenon—the "real strength of a qualitative approach" (Maxwell, 1996, p. 59)—rather than attempting to identify and account for differences between cases. In this way, compared to a multiple-case study, a single-case design was better suited to a clear appreciation and rich description of PPSL in graduate counselor education. The second reason for selecting a single-case design was based on the lack of information or research about the integration of service-learning in graduate counselor education. According to Yin (1989), when a phenomenon occurs so infrequently that few (if any) patterns have been established, a single case is more appropriate to document and analyze. At the same time, a single-case design was potentially problematic if the case did not represent what it was thought to represent at the outset of the study (Yin).

Setting

The current section provides a framework for understanding the setting under investigation. The first segment offers information about the broader context in which PPSL occurs. The following section outlines the structure and processes of PPSL at

Monroe University (MU). The final two segments provide brief descriptions of two courses incorporating PPSL at MU. These course descriptions are primarily based on counselor educators' reports and syllabus review.

City, University, and Graduate Counselor Education Program

The current study investigated the use of PPSL in the graduate counselor education program at MU. Monroe University is located in a large western city with a population that resembles United States' entire population in many demographic areas, including age, gender, and economic characteristics. This western city, however, is distinct in that 43% of its population identifies as Latino or Hispanic, whereas the national figure is slightly less than 14% (Factfinder Web site, 2003). With regard to the university setting, MU is a culturally diverse institution with almost 25,000 students. The average student at MU is 27 years-old.

Concerning the specific program under study, MU's counselor education master's program includes approximately 125 student counselors. The program is accredited by the Council for Accreditation of Counseling and Related Educational Programs (CACREP). The mission of the counselor education master's program at MU is stated as:

> The program is committed to the enhancement of human development and psychological health across the lifespan and reflects a belief in promoting the optimal potential in all individuals and to facilitate their maximum participation and contribution to a better society. By integrating theory, research, practice, and service, and encouraging interdisciplinary collaboration, the program encourages holistic theoretical, pragmatic, and innovative intervention approaches. The program is dedicated to the preparation of professional counselors who are informed and

> sensitive to the diversity and uniqueness of individuals, families and communities by promoting the dignity, worth, potential, and well-being of all people. ("Counselor Education Program," n.d.)

Based on information gathered during a site visit conducted by CACREP in 2004, 104 student counselors are enrolled in the master's counselor education program (C. Alston, personal communication, September 9, 2004). Four faculty have been identified as affiliated with the counselor education master's program at MU, including two assistant professors, an associate professor, and a full professor ("Counselor Education Program," n.d.).

Pre-Practicum Service-Learning at Monroe University: Structure and Processes

Pre-practicum service-learning in the graduate counselor education program at MU began in the mid 1990s. Pre-practicum service-learning in this context is coordinated by the Community Outreach Center (COC). The COC is led by a director with a doctoral degree in counselor education. The director also instructs courses in the graduate counselor education program at MU. One or two graduate assistants serve as staff at COC. These graduate students are doctoral students in counselor education at MU who receive assistantships for 10 hours per week and tuition reimbursement for six credit hours. Community Outreach Center staff play many roles in the organization and execution of PPSL, including orienting student counselors to the process of PPSL and conducting evaluations of PPSL as reported by student counselors and site supervisors. A more detailed description of COC staff's roles and responsibilities is outlined in a subsequent section of the manuscript.

Pre-practicum service-learning is required in three graduate counselor education courses at MU. The three courses are: Foundations of Counseling, Community Agency Counseling, and School Counseling. All counselor education master's students at MU must pass the Foundations of Counseling course and either the Community Agency Counseling course or the School Counseling course in order to graduate. Therefore, all student counselors who graduate from MU take part in PPSL at least twice.

In the Foundations of Counseling course, student counselors are required to complete 20 hours of PPSL at either a school or community agency. In the School Counseling course, student counselors are required to complete 30 hours of PPSL at a school. Similarly, in the Community Agency Counseling course, student counselors are required to complete 30 hours of PPSL at a community agency. If student counselors are enrolled in two of the above courses during the same semester, they are required to fulfill each course's PPSL hours' requirement.

At the beginning of the semester, student counselors in courses requiring PPSL are provided with a list of about 80 established PPSL sites in the area. Established school sites include elementary schools, middle schools, high schools, and alternative schools. Established community agency sites include: hospitals, career centers, homeless shelters, women's centers, juvenile detention centers, retirement communities, youth centers, and family service centers. Student counselors select a site according to a number of factors (e.g., training needs, site location, and professional or personal interests). Before student counselors can begin PPSL, they are responsible for making contact with sites or site supervisors and then interviewing with their site supervisors to assess fit.

While carrying out PPSL, student counselors are involved in a variety of activities. At schools, student counselors' activities include: shadowing school counselors, developing and implementing interventions, interviewing professional counselors, making class presentations, consulting with teachers, assisting with academic planning, carrying out mediation training, observing staff discussions of students, facilitating or co-facilitating psycho-educational groups, and aiding teachers in the classroom. At community agencies, student counselors' activities include: co-facilitating therapy groups, visiting with service recipients in non-clinical settings, shadowing professional counselors, observing clinical sessions, performing administrative work, assisting clients with career planning, witnessing parenting classes, observing staff discussions of clients, and conducting recreational therapy. Guidelines established by COC specify that student counselors "will not provide counseling services" while conducting PPSL.

Community Agency Counseling course. The identified goals of the Community Agency Counseling course are to encourage student counselors to: rethink traditional intra-psychic models of counseling and implement interventions designed to create systemic changes in clients' lives. Attempts to accomplish these goals are made by addressing the history and theory of community counseling, requiring student counselors to write a grant, and having student counselors participate in PPSL. This course also emphasizes areas such as "prevention, consultation, outreach, program evaluation…working with vulnerable populations within communities, and multicultural issues." For the most part, PPSL assignments and grading of PPSL for this course are

coordinated by COC staff. The most focused period of in-class discussion of PPSL occurs at the end of the semester.

School Counseling Course. The stated objectives of the School Counseling course are to:

> Help students understand the role of the school counselor, [have students] be able to articulate what the national model for school counseling programs is, and be able to identify and have some strategies for dealing with certain kinds of issues that come up in the schools like abuse and suicide.

Efforts to meet these objectives are made by requiring student counselors to carry out PPSL at a school. Moreover, as part of the process of PPSL, student counselors are asked to complete a project in which they design, implement, and assess an intervention. Student counselors then present the intervention to their classmates. Together, PPSL and the aforementioned project account for 100 out of 200 possible points for the class. As part of this course, student counselors also: (a) shadow and interview a school counselor at the elementary, middle, and high school levels, (b) critique two professional journals about school counseling, and (c) write brief summaries of course readings. Discussion of PPSL occurs periodically throughout the semester and is initiated by either the counselor educator or student counselors. Time constraints shape the quantity and quality of ongoing discussion of PPSL throughout the semester. Similar to the Community Agency Counseling course, the most focused period of in-class discussion of PPSL occurs at the end of the semester.

Participants

Participants for the study included counselor educators (n = 2) who taught a graduate-level counseling course integrating PPSL at MU. One of the counselor educators was female and self-identified as Anglo. This counselor educator was an adjunct professor who taught a School Counseling course at MU. The other counselor educator was male, taught a Community Counseling course at MU, and held an assistant professorship. This counselor educator did not respond to follow-up demographic questions, thus his self-identified racial/ethnic background was unknown to the researcher. Both counselor educators had at least three semesters of experience instructing a graduate counseling course incorporating PPSL. The counselor educators were invited to participate because of their service-learning expertise and their position as evaluators of the influence of pedagogies on student counselors.

This study also included counselor education doctoral students (n = 3) who coordinated PPSL at MU. Two of the three doctoral student coordinators were female. Female doctoral student coordinators self-identified as: White (1) and Anglo (1). The male doctoral student coordinator did not respond to follow-up demographic questions, thus his self-identified racial/ethnic background was unknown to the researcher. All three doctoral student coordinators were students in the counselor education doctoral program at MU with at least one year of experience as coordinators of PPSL. According to the COC director, the doctoral student coordinators served an important role in the organization and administration of PPSL at MU (C. Alston, personal communication, April 14, 2004). These doctoral student coordinators' perspectives on PPSL activities and the effects of PPSL on student counselors were valuable to the current study. All

potential faculty and doctoral student participants were notified of the scope of the study via telephone or e-mail and their participation was requested.

The current study also included alumni of the counselor education master's program at MU. Alumni (n = 7) graduated within the last five years and carried out PPSL in at least two of three graduate counseling courses at MU. Six of the seven alumni participants were female, which was fairly representative of the ratio of males to females recently enrolled in the counselor education master's program at MU (C. Alston, personal communication, September 9, 2004). Alumni self-identified as: White (3), Caucasian (2), and Multi-racial (1). One of the alumni did not respond to follow-up demographic questions, thus this alumnus' self-identified racial/ethnic background was unknown to the researcher. Alumni's responses to other demographic questions indicated the following information: (a) alumni ranged in age from early 30s to early 50s; (b) alumni completed an agency, school, and/or dual track while working toward their master's counselor education degrees; and (c) alumni had a wide range of previous counseling coursework and previous counseling work experience prior to conducting PPSL. These alumni were invited to participate because of their knowledge about and recent experiences with PPSL and practicum training at MU.

Potential alumni participants were informed of the scope of this study and their participation was requested via e-mail. The e-mail was sent by the alumni office at MU on the researcher's behalf. It briefly outlined the current study and provided ways to contact the researcher. Recent graduates who participated in PPSL as part of their graduate counseling training at MU and who were interested in taking part in the study were asked to respond to the researcher directly. Snowball sampling was also used to

identify alumni participants. Alumni and counselor educator participants were asked, "Which alumnus knows a lot about pre-practicum service-learning through the Community Outreach Program? Who should I talk to?" This allowed the researcher to gather information from alumni who were deemed knowledgeable about the focus of the study.

Across participant groups, many similarities existed. Most of the participants were female and identified as Caucasian, White, or Anglo. All participants had direct experience with PPSL, in one form or another. Differences within and across groups, when present, will be illustrated in a discussion of the study's findings.

Sample Size

As with most qualitative research, the issue of sample size in the present study was complex. The nature of qualitative inquiry is such that the meaningfulness of the findings has more to do with the richness of the information gathered from the participants than the number of participants (Patton, 1990). As the data emerged, two criteria were used to assess whether enough participants had been included in the study. The first criterion was sufficiency, which helped to ensure that there were "sufficient numbers to reflect the range of participants…that make up the population so that others outside the sample might have a chance to connect to the experiences of those is it" (Seidman, 1991, p. 45). The second criterion was saturation of information, which was the point at which the researcher began to hear the same things described again (Seidman). The researcher consulted with a qualitative research expert to make a more informed decision about saturation during this study's data collection.

Permission to conduct this study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board at Indiana University, Bloomington. Stamped study information sheets were sent to all participants.

Data Collection

Two different methods of data collection were used to answer the research questions. Two rounds of qualitative interviews were conducted with each participant. In addition, documents that were deemed relevant to the scope of the current study were reviewed.

Interviews

Interviews are key sources of evidence in case study research (Yin, 1989). In the present study, interviews played a major role in providing data to answer the research questions. Qualitative interview data typically emerge from asking interview questions that are open-ended and from conducting interviews that are dynamic, flexible, and inductive (e.g., Patton, 1982; Taylor & Bogdan, 1988). Like other forms of naturalistic inquiry, qualitative interviewing is a process wherein, “The more general the provocation, the more [the] stories will reflect what respondents view as salient issues, meaningful evidence, and appropriate inferences” (Wolf & Tymitz, 1976-1977, p. 6). Consistent with Taylor and Bogdan (1988), during the later stages of the current study, interview questions became more directive as the researcher learned more about the participants and their perspectives. A potential challenge to interviews, however, is that they sometimes yield insufficient data with participants who are shy or hesitant to share their ideas (Creswell, 1998). Accordingly, care was taken to build rapport with all interviewees in the current study to help facilitate open dialogue. Rapport was established by holding

follow-up interviews with participants, demonstrating an understanding of participants' experiences, and self-disclosing when appropriate (Glesne, 1999).

For the first round of interviews, a semi-structured interview format (see the Appendix) was used because it: (a) allows the flexibility to respond to the emerging perspectives of interviewees as the interview unfolds (Merriam, 1988) and (b) makes the interview systematic across different participants by restricting the issues to be discussed (Taylor & Bogdan, 1988). The first interview was conducted via telephone and lasted approximately 60 minutes. All telephone interviews were audio-taped and transcribed verbatim. The first round of interviews occurred over the course of four and a half months, from mid-July 2004 to early November 2004. The follow-up interviews were conducted via e-mail and took place from early January 2005 to early March 2005. The spacing between the first and second round of interviews allowed time to conduct preliminary analyses of the data and organize questions for the follow-up interviews. The follow-up interviews helped fulfill three objectives: to explore unresolved topics, to probe for clarification, and to potentially strengthen the trustworthiness of the findings (Glesne, 1999). Both rounds of interviews were essential to gathering information regarding participants' experiences, reactions, thoughts, feelings and stories of PPSL, which helped to answer the exploratory research questions that guided this study.

Documents

The value of documents as research data is frequently underestimated in conventional research methods books (Berg, 1998). In the present study, program documents (e.g., student counselors' PPSL reports, informational packets on PPSL, and a

PPSL site listing) were collected. In addition, promotional documents (e.g., a campus newsletter about PPSL) were collected.

The document data were valuable because they clarified interview data. In addition, these documents facilitated the process of data triangulation by corroborating data collected during the two rounds of qualitative interviews (Yin, 1989). At the same time, the use of documents presented a concern in that there were some discrepancies between the messages communicated by a document and the data collected via interview (Heppner, et al., 1999). In cases where such discrepancies arose in this study, participants were asked to review and comment on the conflicting information, thus creating the opportunity for a richer appreciation of PPSL in graduate counselor training at MU.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted simultaneously with data collection, as has been recommended in the literature on qualitative research methods (e.g., Creswell, 1994; Glesne, 1999). In this way, the meanings, explanations, and relationships that emerged from early data analysis could inform later data collection acts. As well, simultaneous data analysis prepared the researcher for a more focused period of analysis after data collection had finished (Glesne).

The analytic process was one that entailed reducing the wealth of incoming data into a series of smaller, thematic pieces in order to develop a picture of the meaning counselor educators, doctoral student coordinators, and alumni made of PPSL. During data collection, the researcher kept a reflective log in which he recorded analytic notes and questions that surfaced during interviews. The researcher also reviewed the data following transcription and made comments to help clarify and expand patterns. These

strategies are supported in the literature (e.g., Glesne, 1999) and they helped the researcher to make links across the data and to capture passing, though possibly meaningful interpretations of the data.

Following data collection, a more focused period of analyses occurred. Using an emic approach (Mathison, 1993), patterns emerging form participants' accounts were identified and then sorted into categories. More specifically, this analytic process involved these steps:

1. Review a subset of interview transcripts and jot down preliminary ideas
2. Group similar ideas into clusters
3. Find descriptive wording for clusters and designate clusters with codes
4. Review and code all transcripts and documents
5. Determine whether new clusters emerge and whether codes fully capture clusters
6. Reread the data to enrich understanding of emerging patterns and to draw links between related clusters

This method of analysis permitted the researcher to understand and describe PPSL through the experiences, reactions, and stories of the participants.

Verification Techniques

First, the researcher collaborated with a faculty member who was an expert in qualitative research to devise interview questions for this study. This period of collaboration was designed to promote question clarity and to strengthen the connection between the interview questions and the present study's research questions.

Second, interview questions were piloted with an individual who is knowledgeable about PPSL. The pilot interview was audio-taped, transcribed, and then

reviewed by the qualitative research expert and the researcher to assess the structure of the interview, the appropriateness of the interview questions, and the researcher's ability to gather useful data.

Third, multiple data collection methods (i.e., interview and document review) and different sources (i.e., counselor educators, recent alumni of the graduate counselor education program, and current doctoral students who coordinate PPSL) were used to provide corroborating evidence to help identify themes (Merriam, 1988).

The fourth verification procedure was member checks, which typically involves "taking data, analyses, interpretations, and conclusions back to the participants so that they can judge the accuracy and credibility of the account" (Creswell, 1998, p. 203). In the present study, participants were asked to comment on incomplete or confusing interview transcriptions during follow-up interviews. Also, the researcher asked four participants—two alumni, one counselor educator, and one doctoral student coordinator—to review and provide feedback on the findings. Each participant reviewer was asked to offer thoughts regarding how the researcher's findings did and did not represent the participant's perspectives and experiences. Three segments were provided to each participant reviewer: (a) a summary of the emergent themes, (b) a summary of the responses to the research questions that guided the present study, and (c) one of the four themes that emerged from the data.

Fifth, the qualitative research expert and one of the researcher's colleagues provided feedback along phases of the study. In particular, the reviewers read and commented on initial interview transcripts as well as segments of the study's findings. These reviewers were asked to think about and respond to questions such as, "What is

missing from the interviews," "Does the data help answer the research questions," and "Could the findings have been interpreted in a different way?" The researcher's colleague was suited to the role of reviewer given her previous experience in qualitative research. Moreover, this particular colleague was not familiar with service-learning and thus seemed appropriate for the task of objectively reviewing elements of the study.

The final verification procedure was a rich description of the data. The degree of detail that was provided was intended to shed light on the complex features of the phenomenon under study and to enable readers to determine to what extent the findings provide an understanding about similar settings, groups and events, if at all (Berg, 1998).

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

The purpose of the current study was to articulate a thorough description of pre-practicum service-learning (PPSL) in the context of graduate counselor education in order to identify: (a) the perceived effects (or lack of effect) of PPSL on student counselors' overall development and (b) the way PPSL participants compare PPSL to practicum training. Qualitative interviews and document review were used to address this study's purpose.

The counselor education master's program at Monroe University (MU) included individual and group practicum training. Little data was collected about group practicum training at MU. Unless otherwise specified, the general term "practicum training" will be used in the discussion of findings and refer to individual practicum training.

General Description of Findings

Participants

In an effort to provide a frame for this study's findings, points of similarity and difference within and across participant groups need to be explicated. Counselor educators appeared to share: a sense of familiarity with instructing a course integrating PPSL, an emphasis on providing the researcher with clear information around their respective courses, and a limit to the amount of time they could devote to taking part in the current study. Doctoral student coordinators seemed to share positive views of the training value of PPSL and agreeableness toward participation in this study. Alumni

appeared to share openness toward the researcher and feelings of responsibility for being reliable, coherent research participants.

Areas of difference within participant groups seemed rarer, but noteworthy. One counselor educator did not respond to follow-up interview questions due to lack of time on his part. A doctoral student coordinator seemed more willing than other members of this participant group to address areas of improvement for PPSL. Some alumni described having more experienced counseling backgrounds than their peers prior to completing courses involving PPSL. These differences will be further explored in subsequent sections.

Across participant groups, many similarities appeared to exist. The participants seemed to be agreeable interviewees and typically appeared open to responding to all questions the researcher asked about PPSL. With regard to demographics, most of the participants were female and identified as Caucasian. All participants had direct experience with PPSL—as instructors, coordinators, or students. Differences across participant groups are best understood through a thematic lens and will be illustrated in later segments of the manuscript.

General Trends and Omissions

An acknowledgment of general trends and omissions is also important to providing a framework for making sense of this study's findings. One trend seemed to be counselor educators and doctoral student coordinators' explicit and implicit support of PPSL. A second trend was an apparent connection between participants' level of involvement in PPSL and the richness with which they described PPSL. Typically, alumni's accounts of PPSL seemed to be richest, followed by doctoral student

coordinators', with counselor educators having the least rich descriptions. A third trend was that documents reviewed for this study did not reflect an integration between PPSL and other training practices within the counselor education master's program at MU.

With respect to omissions, scarcely present in participants' stories was an awareness of PPSL as a way to fulfill public purposes and address community concerns. What seemed to be rare in many participants' accounts was an awareness of, or a curiosity about, the needs and desires of service recipients within host schools and community agencies. Conversely, participants tended to emphasize PPSL as a method of fostering student counselor professional development and learning. Much attention was paid to PPSL as helping to meet student counselors' training needs, such as professional socialization as well as assessment of interests and non-interests. Rather than speaking of PPSL as delivery of community services, most participants described PPSL by way of explaining processes relevant to student counselor training (e.g., interactions with professional counselors and observation of professional counseling activities). The apparent focus on training over service that emerged from this study's data was surprising given: (a) the link made in the extant literature between service-learning in undergraduate training and students' social development (e.g., appreciation of community needs and promotion of citizenship values) and (b) the researcher's expectations of PPSL as a way to further student counselors' commitment to and awareness of social responsibility. Further articulation of this omission will be documented throughout the following chapter.

A second omission noticed by the researcher was a lack of data provided by counselor educators about practicum training at MU. In particular, both counselor

educators expressed hesitancy to respond and a lack of knowledge around practicum training. This omission suggested a lack of association between the counselor educator participants in this study (who were not members of the core faculty) and a central practice of the counselor education master's program at MU. This omission also pointed toward a lack of integration between practicum training and PPSL in terms of how the two training methods were conceptualized and practiced at MU. Finally, given that core counselor education faculty did not appear involved in the facilitation of PPSL courses, some doubt was raised about the importance of PPSL as a training method within the graduate counselor education program at MU.

Summary of Themes

Four themes emerged from interview and document data regarding student counselors' training experiences. The data also provided insights into the research questions that guided this study. An explication of emergent themes will occur first, followed by a synthesis of the findings as responses to the research questions.

Generally, themes intersected the data provided across participant groups. Two of the four themes spoke to both PPSL and practicum training. Points of divergence within the emergent themes existed and these areas of difference will be discussed fully in subsequent segments of the manuscript.

Four themes emerged from interview and document data regarding student counselors' training experiences. In decreasing order of importance, these four themes were: (a) direction, (b) involvement, (c) ways of learning, and (d) time. *Direction* related to the clarity of and guidance within PPSL. Participants' accounts spoke to: (a) efforts to instill direction within PPSL and (b) the degree to which PPSL was experienced as

clearly or unclearly structured. Direction also pointed toward a perceived outcome of PPSL, particularly that PPSL provided a sense of direction from which student counselors could make subsequent academic and professional decisions. *Involvement* referred to how PPSL and practicum training were experienced by student counselors along three areas: level of participation, feelings of responsibility, and supervision. Typically, PPSL seemed to be understood as requiring less involvement than practicum training. However, PPSL was sometimes experienced by student counselors as demanding and/or confusing, as will be illustrated in the discussion of direction. *Ways of learning* spoke to the ways in which PPSL was understood differently than non-field-based pre-practicum training and practicum training. In general, PPSL was described as an applied way of learning, while other forms of pre-practicum training were understood as conceptual ways of learning. In addition, while PPSL was understood to focus on student counselors' learning <u>about</u> counseling, practicum training appeared to emphasize student counselors' learning around <u>how to</u> provide counseling. *Time* referred to the ways in which participants' perceptions and experiences of PPSL were shaped by time. Participants' stories of PPSL included discussion of time pressures and ways in which student counselors attempted to reduce that pressure.

Summary of Responses to Research Questions

Interview and document data provided insights into the research questions that guided this study. However, before outlining these insights, an important caveat is needed. Three of this study's research questions indicated that the researcher would explore and illustrate the views of counselor educators at MU. In actuality, the present study only included counselor education faculty members at MU who taught a course

incorporating PPSL. Moreover, counselor educator participants in this study were not members of the core faculty at MU. Accordingly, this study's sample of counselor educators was not representative of the counselor education faculty at MU. Thus, as originally written, research questions specific to the perspectives of counselor educators could not be answered. However, this study's sample of counselor educators did allow for the examination and explication of the views of counselor education faculty members who were familiar with PPSL processes and who seemed aware of PPSL's potential effects.

Considerable data overlap existed across participant groups. Given this data overlap, research questions were combined by areas of focus. The areas of focus were: (a) specific aspects that define PPSL, (b) perceived effects of PPSL on student counselors' overall development, and (c) comparisons of PPSL and practicum training.

Pre-practicum service-learning seemed primarily defined by the activities student counselors carried out at community agencies and schools. Student counselors' PPSL activities appeared to resemble aspects of apprenticing (Hamilton & Hamilton, 1997). Pre-practicum service-learning also seemed to be defined by: (a) reflection and (b) efforts carried out by the Community Outreach Center (COC) to organize and administer PPSL. With regard to perceived effects of PPSL, PPSL seemed principally to help student counselors gain their professional bearings. Lastly, PPSL and practicum training appeared to diverge along many dimensions, primarily the level of student counselor involvement and overall structure. In particular, PPSL required less involvement and was less structured than practicum training. Some commonalities seemed to exist between

PPSL and practicum training, namely both felt “real” and were considered “first steps” into professional counseling.

Points of contradiction within and across participant groups related to the research questions will also be illustrated in a subsequent section.

Emergent Themes

The framework below represents the perspectives of all of the study’s participants. The discussion reflects the ways in which the participants understood and described two training activities at MU, namely PPSL and practicum training. Points of similarity and difference are explored across participant groups and training methods. As consistent with participants’ accounts, the term “pre-practicum service-learning” (or “PPSL”) will refer to the field-based component of PPSL, unless otherwise specified.

Direction

Direction emerged most often from interview and document data, and it seemed to shed the most light on PPSL at MU. This theme spoke to processes and perceived outcomes of PPSL at MU. With regard to PPSL processes, stories by doctoral student coordinators and counselor educators pointed toward attempts to instill direction around the set-up and execution of PPSL, while some alumni’s accounts suggested that PPSL was sometimes experienced as confusing and unclear. Relative to perceived PPSL outcomes, PPSL appeared to be understood to provide a sense of direction by helping student counselors learn about professional counseling and themselves as future counselors as well as informing student counselors’ subsequent academic and professional decisions.

"As long as you plan effectively for [pre-practicum service-learning], you can be successful." Effectively planning for PPSL seemed to mean that PPSL participants, such as student counselors and site supervisors, were of the same mind. The process of creating an agreed upon road map was addressed by doctoral student coordinators and counselor educators. A counselor educator, for example, believed that "standardiz[ing]" PPSL across three courses was one way to encourage clarity and to offer uniform guidance (CE 2). Standardization, this counselor educator said, made "it easier for students to understand [PPSL]—they really have a clear understanding of who they contact, how they're evaluated, how the grades are given, and the importance of the service-learning" (CE 2). A doctoral student coordinator appeared to share this view. This doctoral student coordinator spoke to ongoing efforts to instill direction: "[COC staff are] trying to standardize the [PPSL] requirement so that it's not confusing for students….We also are trying to set up a structure so that it makes sense for teachers, students, community schools, and agencies alike" (DS 1).

The views above pointed toward doctoral student coordinator and counselor educators' appreciation of the importance of providing student counselors with a clear framework from which to understand and carry out PPSL. In order to establish a sense of clarity and structure to PPSL, doctoral student coordinators and counselor educators appeared to take several steps. A counselor educator, for example, held conversations with COC staff to have "service-learning more integrated into the course [and] into the syllabus" (DS 2). Doctoral student coordinators mentioned that they conducted site visits at the end of the semester in order to make assessments of PPSL and have direct communication with site supervisors, both of which appeared to help doctoral student

coordinators know the PPSL landscape. A doctoral student coordinator described site visits in the following way:

> We make a site visit to each of the site supervisors every semester to talk with them, to let them know that we appreciate what they're doing for us, to ask them if they have any questions, to give them the opportunity to tell us if they have any concerns. So, we're always, we're always evaluating in that sense. We're always trying to make sure that [PPSL is] working here or it is working there, and trying to stay on top of it if it doesn't. (DS 1)

According to another doctoral student coordinator, these site visits not only served the purpose of assessing recently completed PPSL, they also informed site recommendations for subsequent semesters. This doctoral student coordinator offered examples of statements made to student counselors based on information gathered during site visits, such as: "For those of you that want to do more experiential stuff [during PPSL], this is the place to go," and, "I know someone who really does a good job with [what you are interested in], why don't you [complete PPSL there]" (DS 2).

Conversations between student counselors and doctoral student coordinators seemed to usually occur during doctoral student coordinators' visits to the graduate counseling classes at the beginning of the semester. During these visits, student counselors were reported to be able to ask questions and raise concerns to doctoral student coordinators about locating sites and beginning PPSL. Accordingly, these classroom visits also appeared to serve the function of instilling direction.

In addition to attempts noted above, student counselors were also given a list of sites at the beginning of the semester. A list of PPSL sites was reviewed for this study

and it revealed efforts by COC to specify “expectations of the [student counselors] at the site[s].” Each site on the list indicated the site name, a contact person, and the site address. Many of the site listings also indicated hours when student counselors could complete PPSL and the types of activities student counselors could carry out (e.g., “classroom presentations,” “opportunities to shadow [a] counselor,” or “assist with child care”). The site listing also specified that typical PPSL activities included “shadowing a counselor, co-facilitating groups, giving psycho-educational presentations, or providing administrative assistance.” In bold print, a message read that student counselors “will not provide counseling services” as part of their on-site PPSL activities. Student counselors and site supervisors were also supplied with packets outlining typical PPSL activities that student counselors could conduct. These informational packets also provided a framework for understanding the rationale of PPSL (i.e., “‘bridging the gap’ between the university and the community”), the objectives of PPSL (e.g., “to create quality field experiences for counseling students throughout their training”), and basic PPSL processes (e.g., “student counselors are provided with close monitoring and clinical consultation at every level of their experience in [PPSL]”).

For counselor educators and doctoral student coordinators in this study, having a compass to guide PPSL seemed important. Some efforts to instill a sense of direction included site visits, doctoral student coordinator-student counselor communication, and attempts to standardize PPSL across courses, sites, and participants (i.e., student counselors, counselor educators, and site supervisors). Generally, COC staff members appeared to spearhead policies and procedures aimed at infusing direction.

"I kind of was thrown in and I didn't know what to expect." Despite efforts to provide structure around and place limits on student counselors' participation during PPSL, some stories by participants suggested that student counselors were unclear about their role during PPSL. An alumnus described PPSL as awkward and uncomfortable:

> It's just kind of awkward. You're always sticking out. I'm at [a site function], I'm the only person [clients] don't know because they've been having this training for several weeks. You always sort of stick out a little bit, you're never quite sure what your role is. And to me, that's a little uncomfortable not knowing what your role is. There's no job description for [PPSL]. (AL 3)

Another alumnus offered a similar, but seemingly more emotionally charged perspective:

> The [student counselors] didn't have sufficient information before we were actively involved in a situation that could potentially "blow up in our face." The service-learning site counselor-supervisor didn't even bother to read the description and even if they [*sic*] did read it, it wasn't followed. (AL 2)

Finally, a third alumnus shared, "[PPSL] wasn't spelled out well." (AL 5)

Part of student counselors' confusion seemed to stem from a lack of understanding about what constituted acceptable and unacceptable behavior during PPSL. Determining acceptability appeared to be puzzling given that student counselors were training to be counselors and usually carrying out PPSL in counseling contexts, but advised not to provide counseling services. A doctoral student coordinator spoke to the how difficult this might be for student counselors:

> [Student counselors are] more knowledgeable than [typical] volunteer[s]…but they aren't licensed counselors yet so they can't provide therapy in the way that perhaps

> would be nice if that were…doable. But, we have to work within the limitations of what we have, which is we have master's students who are…a little more than volunteers who don't have any training, but they're not fully licensed yet. (DS 1)

A counselor educator referred to this potential conundrum by repeating a question heard from student counselors: "Well, gosh, if we can't be too involved because we can't be counseling, then what is there that we can really do that's okay" (CE 1).

Another aspect of student counselors' confusion appeared to be the result of key stakeholders (i.e., namely site supervisors, doctoral student coordinators, counselor educators, and student counselors) misunderstanding the parameters around PPSL. As an example, according to alumni interviews and document data, it appeared that site supervisors sometimes misunderstood student counselors' roles during PPSL. In particular, an alumnus experienced being referred to as an "intern" during PPSL. This alumnus made the following comments about one of the potential pitfalls of PPSL:

> Students are thrown into situations where they are seen as "interns" and people (including supervisors) may not understand that this might be someone's first semester in grad school! There were definitely times where people expected me to be in a counselor's role at my [PPSL sites] and I was not prepared. I wanted to wear a big sign that said, "I am not an intern." (AL 3)

An apparently similar misunderstanding on the part of site supervisors was noted during the researcher's review of documents for this study. In what seemed to be letters of support of PPSL at MU, some site supervisors addressed student counselors carrying out PPSL as interns. For example, one site supervisor wrote, "I was very fortunate to have an

intern who is not only a quality individual but also [someone] who will be an excellent counselor."

In addition, some data suggested that student counselors' confusion was a reflection of stakeholders operating under limited information regarding how PPSL at MU was conceptualized and practiced. An alumnus shared the following story about feeling lost during the process of identifying PPSL sites:

> You're just kind of told, "Okay, go out and find a site that you can go to for 40 hours." It's a little difficult. It's a lot, I think, your first semester in a brand new school to have to try to find an agency and invite yourself over for 40 hours. They're asking you what you're supposed to be doing. There was sort of a lot of turnover in the [COC] office, and they had different master's or doc students every semester. So they didn't always know a lot about the [COC] program or they didn't know about any of the sites—they were always new. It was a little bit, you had to do a lot of research and ask fellow students. It's difficult again when you're brand new and you don't know anybody to network like that. (AL 3)

A different example of stakeholders having partial appreciation of PPSL was addressed by another alumnus who stated, "The program didn't do a very good job of letting us know initially during orientation or things like that to be prepared to have to put in all these extra hours for this [PPSL] program that was required" (AL 6).

It should be mentioned that some alumni experienced PPSL as understandable and clearly practiced. An alumnus' accounts, in particular, seemed to communicate a feeling of clarity about the process of PPSL. This alumnus said,

> [COC staff] did a pretty good job of explaining the program….From the very beginning, they had a nice handout that included a lot of the details and the representatives were there and did a very thorough job of explaining the details. (AL 7)

This alumnus also described an open dialogue with the site supervisor that allowed the alumnus to structure the level of participation during PPSL:

> [My site supervisor said], "You can do, you can participate if you want, or you can just observe if you want." [And in response, I said], "I would be safer and it would be less of a risk to sit back…but I will learn more if I go ahead and participate." (AL 7)

The words of another alumnus appeared to demonstrate an understanding of what COC guidelines might suggest would be acceptable student counselor involvement during PPSL. In reference to facilitating group discussion with children during PPSL, this alumnus shared the following story:

> We did some minor processing…. I was half way done with my program, not very comfortable doing any [deep] processing….[So] I just kind of went with what the program director was saying. [I asked the children], "What did you learn? How did that feel? What were you thinking when this happened?" And I asked them about their reactions and their responses to the situations on a relatively surface level. (AL 6)

Pre-practicum service-learning at MU was described by some participants as unclear and confusing in terms of student counselors' roles at community agencies and schools. Based on interview and document data, the author suggested that part of the

confusion stemmed from misunderstandings of the expectations and parameters around PPSL as well as potentially inherent inconsistencies between student counselors' training and the limits upon their level of involvement during PPSL.

"[Pre-practicum service-learning] really varies from site to site." The confusion that seemed to be felt by some student counselors was not altogether surprising given the context in which PPSL was carried out. Most notably to this researcher, PPSL at MU included approximately 125 student counselors and more than 80 participating schools and community agencies. As might be expected given the multitude of sites, site needs, participant expectations, site supervisor demands, and personalities involved, PPSL was carried out in a number of different forms.

Participants' words reflected the idea that each PPSL site offered a distinct experience to student counselors. When asked to describe a typical day of PPSL, participants offered these responses: (a) "That's a hard one because it's going to totally depend" (CE 1), "Well, it really varies from site to site" (CE 2), "There is such a range" (DS 2), "Which one are you interested in because they were two completely different" (AL 1), and "Do you want me to include both" (AL 7). An alumnus' description of PPSL at two sites illustrated how PPSL could be diversely experienced by student counselors:

> [At one site], it was a bunch of paperwork and organizing housing stuff for them. It was a lot of administrative stuff that I just don't really like. [At another site], I was sitting in on some of the groups with other counselors, sitting in on intakes….Just watching, observing, [and] interacting. (AL 4)

According to participants, PPSL varied across sites based on a number of factors. Some of these factors were: services conducted at the site, student counselors' comfort level,

PPSL-related course assignments, time, and site supervisors' understanding of student counselor involvement and site supervision. These factors were illustrated in alumni's stories of PPSL. An alumnus spoke to the role of personal comfort levels in shaping activities carried out during PPSL:

> I was half way done with my program [and] not very comfortable doing any [deep] processing [with clients] and there was not a licensed counselor there, so I couldn't do that. I just kind of went with what the program director was saying. (AL 3)

Another alumnus addressed the guidelines set forth by the graduate counseling course as shaping PPSL: "We were supposed to put in our 20 hours. We were supposed to develop a special project that [we] would do with all of the classes in the school" (AL 5). These and many other alumni accounts of PPSL reflected numerous factors that shaped the diverse ways that PPSL was experienced.

Some breeches of the policies and principles guiding PPSL were also discussed during interviews, which is not altogether surprising given the numerous facets of PPSL at MU that informed its practices. Some accounts of PPSL suggested that student counselors: (a) acted outside of COC guidelines, (b) felt that they carried clinical responsibilities during PPSL, and/or (c) experienced PPSL as boring. For example, even though student counselors were instructed not to provide counseling services, an alumnus offered the following description of PPSL: "We did the counseling on ourselves, without supervision. There wasn't even a supervisor in the room, just another student and myself" (AL 1). Recounting such situations appeared to evoke feelings of confusion, frustration, and fear for this alumnus. Similar feelings were expressed by another alumnus who spoke in ways suggesting that PPSL involved greater responsibility on the part of student

counselors than advertised by MU. This alumnus stated, “I felt like I had been dumped out there in a sea of sharks, and the kids and I were just looking at each other like, ‘What do we do now?’” (AL 5).

In contrast, there were also student counselors who appeared to experience PPSL as lacking challenge. A counselor educator mentioned that PPSL could be “boring potentially” for student counselors who only conducted observation or who worked as administrative assistants (CE 2). A doctoral student coordinator said that COC staff had “been hearing more and more [from student counselors], ‘I want to do more.’ They get out there and they get excited, and they say, ‘Geez, I wish I could see this client. I wish I could do that’” (DS 3). In line with this point, one student counselor whose written reflections of PPSL were reviewed for this study remarked: “It was hard to remain solely a *shadow* [italics in original document].” The frustrations that might result when student counselors wanted to “do more” during PPSL but could not were exemplified by an alumnus who said, “I was already in practicum and I was already doing counseling [while completing PPSL]. I had already worked [in the counseling field] for a year. So, to me, [PPSL] was a waste of time” (AL 4).

The above paragraphs spoke to the divergent ways in which PPSL at MU was experienced. Participants’ accounts suggested that a number of factors shaped PPSL practices, including services conducted at the site, student counselors’ comfort level, PPSL-related course assignments, and time. Breeches of PPSL policies and principles were also addressed in this section. Some alumni’s stories of being over-involved or bored during PPSL were recounted.

"Do I want to go into schools or do I want to do agency?" As might be expected of beginning graduate students, student counselors at MU appeared to have questions about their academic and professional paths. Participants' perspectives suggested that PPSL helped answer some of student counselors' questions about themselves and the counseling profession. Pre-practicum service-learning also seemed to provide student counselors with counseling-related experiences that informed academic and professional decisions.

Student counselors at MU participated in PPSL as part of at least two courses. Of the three courses incorporating PPSL, all were designed to be taken by student counselors prior to their practicum training. As relative novices, student counselors who carried out PPSL sometimes began PPSL unclear about their academic and professional interests and non-interests. In other words, prior to PPSL, student counselors did not know what they liked and what they did not like. A doctoral student coordinator described student counselors at this stage by saying, "I think when they're brand new, they're not even sure they have questions. [They think], 'I'm not sure what questions I have to ask'" (DS 2). An alumnus self-identified as "green" (AL 2). Similarly, another alumnus said that beginning student counselors were "green, very green" and that they had "very little knowledge" about aspects of professional counseling (AL 4).

Pre-practicum service-learning, in the eyes of many of the participants, provided student counselors with information about their interests and non-interests. A doctoral student coordinator referred to one student counselor's comments after conducting PPSL: "I left teaching second graders and now I'm working with the same age group [during PPSL]. I would rather be with a more adult population" (DS 3). This doctoral student

coordinator continued speaking for a student counselor and said, “This [PPSL experience] did not…get it for me. However, I learned this and I learned that, and I also learned that I want to do this, but I want to do it with a different population” (DS 3). Another doctoral student coordinator shared the following views expressed by student counselors: “I never thought about working in school system, [I have] no background in education, and yet I loved working with little kids [during PPSL]” (DS 2). Similarly, a counselor educator remarked that PPSL allowed student counselors to consider “issues that they might want to deal with or not deal with” (CE 2).

Alumni also shared stories suggesting that PPSL fostered student counselors’ assessments of their interests and non-interests. Two alumni mentioned that conducting PPSL at schools revealed to them that they were not interested in school counseling. An alumnus said, “I didn’t like school counseling” (AL 1), while the other alumnus stated, “I absolutely didn’t want to be a school counselor” (AL 4). Another alumnus made the following remarks about PPSL: “[It was] very useful to actually go out into the field and have a chance to just observe and see what’s out there and what you might be interested in” (AL 3). In response to a question about recommendations for future student counselors at MU, one of these alumni offered the following viewpoint, which seemed to reflect the idea of PPSL as a means to assess professional interests:

> I would suggest that students try to go to [a] type [of] agency that they think they may, in the future, like to work in. I’d also suggest doing their second [PPSL] at another site that they don’t think they would like. (AL 4)

Along with assessing professional interests, a few alumni appeared to consider PPSL as a way to become more self-aware as professional counselors. In speaking about

important aspects of PPSL, an alumnus said, “You also have to know your own stuff. You have to know your own stuff inside of you” (AL 1). Another alumnus remarked that PPSL involved “experiencing my comfort level and also getting to know a little bit more about myself by doing instead of just by sitting and absorbing” (AL 6).

Pre-practicum was not only a way for student counselors to learn about themselves, it also appeared to be a way for student counselors to “see what’s out there” in professional counseling (AL 3). Some participants spoke to this idea. An alumnus said that PPSL offered “a chance to learn as much as you could about a particular area” of counseling (AL 7). Class discussions of PPSL also seemed to provide student counselors with information. An alumnus said that “hearing what other people were doing and what they were experiencing [during PPSL] was very helpful to also let me know different aspects of counseling out in the field” (AL 6). Similarly, a doctoral student coordinator said of discussions of PPSL: “Everybody gets to learn about all these different places even though they [did not carry out PPSL] there” (DS 3).

Another part of “see[ing] what’s out there” appeared to include observing organizations and professional counselors at work. A doctoral student coordinator said, “[Student counselors] get to see everything [during PPSL]….[They] get to see how the whole system works—the bureaucracy, the character of the environment that [they] are in, [and] all kinds of different dimensions that they get to see” (DS 3). As an example, an alumnus chose a particular site for PPSL because, “I wanted to learn more about how those types of [legal] systems work” (AL 6). Learning about how work environments operated seemed to one of the ways that PPSL was experienced and described as a taste of the counseling profession. An alumnus said that PPSL gave a “taste of what the field

may be like" (AL 2). This point was echoed by a counselor educator who claimed, "[PPSL] give[s] students a taste of what the role of a school counselor would be" (CE 1).

Experiencing a taste of the counseling profession and assessing interests via PPSL seemed to help student counselors make subsequent academic and professional decisions. An alumnus described PPSL as an "opportunity to…consider whether the [academic] track is right….[PPSL] would prepare you to find out early if that's not really what [you feel] the most comfortable doing" (AL 7). Another alumnus provided specific examples of how PPSL informed academic decisions: (a) "If I hadn't done [PPSL at] a school, I never would have considered doing the dual track in agency and school counseling and (b) "Doing [PPSL] at the school made me decide to do an internship at a school" (AL 3). Similarly, a counselor educator stated that PPSL allowed student counselors to "see if [school counseling] was the direction that they wanted to go with their counseling program" before they prematurely chose a school counseling track and "went through most of the program and then got an internship [in school counseling]" (CE 1).

Doctoral student coordinators echoed this view of PPSL as shaping student counselors' professional decisions and pathways. In particular, a doctoral student coordinator said that, after participating in PPSL, "[Student counselors] have a better idea of where they want to go" (DS 3). Another doctoral student coordinator said that PPSL encouraged student counselors to begin "thinking about what type of work [they] might want to do after graduating" (DS 1). This doctoral student coordinator also offered an example about a student counselor interested in the intersection of counseling and medicine for which "[PPSL moved] her in the direction of being able to pursue her career exactly as she wish[ed]" (DS 1). Similarly, a third doctoral student coordinator said that

PPSL "definitely changes [the] direction of some areas of expertise [that student counselors] want to develop," and that PPSL could "set the course for where [student counselors are] headed" (DS 2).

The ways that PPSL were perceived to provide guidance to student counselors might be best summarized by a counselor educator who offered the following remarks in a self-study of PPSL at MU that was reviewed for this study:

> [PPSL] experiences allow students to get a realistic picture of the school counselor's role. It may either: 1) reinforce a student's choice to pursue school counseling, 2) open a new door for someone who had not previously considered the schools as an option for a career, or 3) change a student's mind to where s/he decides that the school setting is *not* [italics in original document] the place to be. In any of those situations, [PPSL] is a valuable tool. Clarifying options before a student is too far down a certain road in his/her program is critical. That's what informed decision-making is all about. (CE 1)

Pre-practicum service-learning seemed to offer student counselors first-hand experience with schools, community agencies, and professional counselors. In doing so, PPSL appeared to provide student counselors with information about themselves and the counseling profession, which many participants believed helped to shape student counselors' academic and professional pathways.

Involvement

Emerging second most often from participants' accounts were views about student counselors' involvement. Participants' stories suggested distinctions between PPSL and practicum training along three areas of student counselor involvement: level of

participation, feelings of responsibility, and supervision. Typically, PPSL seemed to be perceived as requiring less involvement than practicum training.

"You're just going to get a little taste of some piece of [professional counseling]." Pre-practicum service-learning at MU appeared to be understood by most participants as a method of introducing student counselors to aspects of professional counseling. An alumnus said, "I think that the service-learning was merely a tip of the iceberg" (AL 2). Another alumnus described PPSL as "get[ting] your feet wet" (AL 6).

The view of PPSL as the tip of the iceberg was also reflected in the words of doctoral student coordinators and counselor educators. A doctoral student coordinator spoke of PPSL as student counselors "puppy dog[ging] along and watch[ing]" professional counselors at work (DS 2). Another doctoral student coordinator considered PPSL as a "brush" with professional counseling (DS 3). Similarly, a counselor educator described PPSL as "a fly on the wall sort of thing" where student counselors were "third-party observer[s] watching as different activities occur" (CE 1). Guidelines of PPSL appeared consistent with the idea of PPSL as "a little taste of some piece" of the counseling profession in that student counselors were prohibited from carrying out unsupervised one-on-one counseling services (DS 1).

Some stories told by alumni about PPSL at schools and community agencies pointed toward the ways in which PPSL was experienced as a brush with the counseling profession. An alumnus described PPSL in the following way:

> It was at the beginning of the year when I was [at the school], so [the site supervisor] was going in to introduce herself to all her classrooms and make sure they knew who the counselor was and what the counselor does....I wouldn't say anything, I would

> just follow her wherever. So if she got a call to go to the office to meet a student, I would just tag right along. I wouldn't really participate or say anything….When she was doing counseling or parents came in, she would always introduce me and let the parents know who I was and ask if it was okay if I was there, but usually I didn't say much. I just kind of smiled and nodded. (AL 3)

Another alumnus provided the following account when asked what the researcher might have seen while observing the alumnus conducting PPSL:

> You'd see me help the counselor get the materials they needed ready for taking to a classroom, go with her to the classroom, go through the entire process of introduction, distributing materials, helping students get the process done, to the process of wrapping up and moving on, leaving the classroom and going back and sort of evaluating. You would also see me…interviewing the counselor about what she did and how she approached [her work]….[You would see] a lot of interviewing her about her experience and how her program was set up and where she got her resources and how she approached different aspects of her work. (AL 7)

A third alumnus referred to PPSL at a community agency in this way: "I wasn't the facilitator, but I was included with the group and had the opportunity to observe the group process" (AL 2). These accounts suggested that student counselors experienced PPSL as helping, observing, and learning.

A similar view was offered by a doctoral student coordinator who recounted a variety of student counselor activities during PPSL, all of which appeared to fit with PPSL as a taste of the counseling profession. At schools:

> [Student counselors] might be doing bookwork in the front office, they might be taking intakes over the phone, where they learn…the demographics of how to take an intake. They also can follow [site supervisors] around….Lots of times, if [site supervisors] are doing any type of group, [student counselors] get to participate as a member, if it's okay with individual clients….Or, if the [site] supervisor introduces them properly, they may be able to sit in on a session. However, they are not supposed to run the session, but they can shadow that way. And, they…lots of times have the opportunity, which I think is very important, to be in on the processing of the clientele that they have observed. (DS 3)

At community agencies, another doctoral student coordinator gave an account of situations where student counselors "held terminally ill babies at a hospital for a program… that is set up to provide support for families of critically ill children" (DS 2). This doctoral student coordinator also shared a story about student counselors "hang[ing] around the porch of an agency setting [for homeless people]" (DS 2).

Taken together, these stories and descriptions of PPSL suggested that PPSL was understood and often experienced as an introduction to professional counseling wherein student counselors witnessed and assisted the work of professional counselors.

"[With] practicum, you're thrown in the pot." The above descriptions spoke to PPSL as a taste of professional counseling and included expressions such as "helping," "tag along," "observe," "sit in," "shadow," and "follow around." Comparatively, accounts of practicum training at MU appeared to entail a different level of participation on the part of student counselors. In particular, the bulk of student counselors' involvement during practicum training appeared to be one-on-one clinical work

conducted outside the immediate presence of a supervisor. The following paragraphs further address distinctions between PPSL and practicum training at MU by exploring student counselors': (a) activities during practicum training and (b) feelings of responsibility while carrying out PPSL and practicum duties.

An alumnus provided the following description of a typical day completing practicum training:

> We'd usually get there at 8[am]….We could see up to three clients per morning, so up to 6 clients per week, twice a week. So I guess we'd get in at 8[am], get the charts out and see if we had messages or whatever, figure out which rooms we were going to be in, put the videos in, ask who was going to observe our sessions, then go meet the client and spend an hour with them. [We would] usually have ten minutes between clients, just like any other therapy practice. So, I had a full load—I had all six clients per week. And then [after the session], [we would] sometimes go over with some of the supervisors what had gone on [and] check out the video tape….[And] write progress notes. (AL 4)

A similar depiction of practicum training was offered by another alumnus:

> When we got there, we double-check over the schedule and see who had a session at what time and then we figured out which room we were going to go into. And, if this was a first time client, we'd look over the file, maybe ask some questions to our [doctoral student] supervisor [or] our professor, and just mentally get prepared and then go into the session. And then after, we would come out of session, [which are] tape recorded and videoed. Once we would come out of our session, we would sit down with either the professor or the [doctoral student] supervisor and our

> classmate…and just process. Process how it went, think of different things, if we needed resources, we'd look up resources for our clients. (AL 6)

These two descriptions, as well as accounts of other alumni, suggested that practicum training was experienced by student counselors as similar to the work of professional counselors. One of the alumni above spoke about the structure of sessions as "just like any other therapy practice," and the other alumnus mentioned the process of becoming mentally prepared for sessions.

In other words, while PPSL was experienced by student counselors as getting their feet wet, practicum training felt like more being "thrown in" (AL 6). This viewpoint was illustrated in the words of many alumni. When asked to compare PPSL and practicum training, an alumnus said: "It's more intense in practicum….You're seeing clients one-on-one….[With PPSL], you're really not in the full mode of practicum….I think practicum is totally a whole different ballgame" (AL 1). This alumnus also described the experience of practicum training as "almost as if you're out in the field doing your own thing," while saying of PPSL, "[It] is your first step of your learning process in the real world" (AL 1). Other alumni seemed to echo this PPSL-practicum training distinction in referring to PPSL as "baby practicum" (AL 7) and "a volunteer experience" (AL 3).

As suggested by the terms used directly above to describe PPSL, differences between PPSL and practicum training were also experienced regarding student counselors' level of felt responsibility. The words of alumni helped to illustrate this point. In speaking about PPSL, an alumnus said:

> It's kind of like you're learning, but you're given some responsibility too. So you're not completely over the fire with it—you're not completely on the spot with it. You're still kind of in student status so you get to learn [and] you get to make mistakes. (AL 6)

A similar message was provided by another alumnus who used a schooling metaphor to compare PPSL and practicum training. In using this metaphor, this alumnus appeared to speak to feelings of responsibility while conducting the two training methods. This alumnus stated, "[PPSL] is just the beginning of it. You're not going to be taking the whole school to the auditorium and teaching them something…. It's sort of like you're in kindergarten [or] first grade" (AL 1). Another alumnus spoke of PPSL as introducing student counselors to professional responsibilities. This alumnus remarked, PPSL "put a lot of responsibility on the student [counselor]… to start being responsible and professional, not just with getting regular school assignments done but with…relating to [professional counselors] who are out there in the field" (AL 7). These alumni appeared to be suggesting that student counselors felt some responsibility for themselves and their own learning during PPSL, but not ultimate responsibility for the delivery of services.

In contrast, during practicum training, an alumnus spoke about meeting with a client for the first time during practicum training and feeling the "tremendous amount of responsibility" that coincides with knowing, "I'm the person who's going to be working with [the client] in this counseling relationship" (AL 7). Another alumnus' description of practicum training seemed to demonstrate that student counselors felt a personal responsibility for providing counseling services. This alumnus said, "In practicum,…

that's when you're thrown into the water and it's sink or swim and you actually do the work of a counselor" (AL 3).

Practicum training, according to this group of alumni, involved one-on-one work with clients that appeared to be experienced as providing real therapy. Alumni described practicum training as different from PPSL in terms of the intensity and type of work carried out by student counselors. In general, practicum training was understood to entail higher levels of participation and responsibility on the part of student counselors.

"*I always had a safety net."* Supervision provided a unique point of interest in this study given its emergence within accounts of both PPSL and practicum training. Supervision during PPSL took a range of forms and it seemed to be experienced by student counselors in a variety of ways. At its best, PPSL supervision was characterized by an appropriate blend of guidance and freedom. For example, one alumnus said of PPSL supervision:

> I felt [the site supervisors] were successful in that they really felt to me like they were mentors in that they weren't trying to be my boss, they were trying to be someone with experience who would help me learn what was right for me, give me some latitude in that, and at the same time, provide me the benefit of their experience. (AL 7)

However, at its worst, PPSL supervision was described as directionless or absent. For example, an alumnus offered the following description of PPSL at a school:

> I had no idea, I was just there. And, the [school] teacher one day knew I was going to be there and that was it. The teacher gave me absolutely no direction or anything. It was kind of, "find your way." (AL 2).

A similar story was told by another alumnus who appeared upset about the absence of support for service recipients and student counselors during PPSL:

> There was no one there to support the kids. There was no one that could guarantee [that] they were going to support the kids once they got back to school….So, if you've got a kid acting out, you don't know what he's acting out about….And there was no self-care for the students, meaning [student counselors]. (AL 5)

A third story of PPSL reflected how difficult it might have been for site supervisors to supervise student counselors while also managing their typical workload. In particular, a doctoral student coordinator referred to a situation in which, "The site supervisor didn't realize that the student [counselor] wanted more [responsibility] and could do more….I think maybe [the site supervisor] was busy…[and] had a lot going on and maybe wasn't as tuned into [the student counselor]" (DS 1).

The above descriptions represented supervision during PPSL at its best and its worst. Somewhere in between existed many stories of PPSL supervision as varied, diversely understood, and uniquely practiced. An alumnus, for example, experienced PPSL supervision as too close at one site (i.e., "I was never alone without [the site supervisor]") and too distant at another site (i.e., "We never had anybody in there watching us") (AL 1). The notion of PPSL supervision as variously practiced was also reflected by a counselor educator who remarked: "I think the supervision varies from site to site based upon the counselor who has been assigned to the student" (CE 1). This counselor educator later said, **"**Some [site supervisors] have more interest and experience in providing supervision than others, so the time and guidance provided does vary" (CE 1).

In comparison to PPSL supervision, accounts of practicum supervision suggested consistency within and across alumni's experiences. The consistency across alumni's practicum experiences was not surprising given that all alumni carried out practicum training at the same facility and appeared to have some of the same supervisors. Many alumni mentioned supervision aids such as videotaping, in-session telephone calls, peer observation, and one-way mirrors. An alumnus offered the following description of supervisory aspects of practicum training:

> There was a phone in [the counseling office] that [the supervisor] could call and say, "Okay, why don't you tell him this, why don't you try this or that," if…the professor felt like you were in trouble, or if he felt like it would be beneficial for you to try something else or whatever. We always got the feedback once we came back upstairs. Once we finished with our client, we came back upstairs where the viewing, where the TV viewers were. And, we always got the feedback immediately [from the supervisor] and from our classmates…[after] every session. (AL 1)

Alumni also referred to practicum supervision as "direct" and "intense" (AL 4) as well as "at hand at all times" (AL 2). Moreover, alumni experienced the supervisors as "very attentive" (AL 1) and "very supportive" (AL 7). When asked how to describe practicum supervision, an alumnus said:

> It was awesome. It was absolutely amazing. It was great. It was very supportive, the [doctoral student] supervisors and the professor [were] very supportive, very informative, and really showed their concern and caring for the [master's] students getting through this process. They were very empathetic too. (AL 6)

The above accounts reflected alumni's understanding of practicum supervision as structured, immediate, present, and encouraging—all of which seemed to contribute to most alumni's feelings of security while conducting practicum training. The words of an alumnus illustrated this point:

> I always had a safety net….[The counseling session] was always taped so I could review it afterward. I always had [the site supervisor] to review it. And even four weeks later, he could say, remember when you had so and so [as a client], and he threw out this question out, this is what you need to do now. (AL 5)

For this group of alumni, practicum supervision provided a stable structure from which student counselors could more comfortably take their first steps as professional counselors. In comparison, stories of PPSL supervision suggested that supervision was not similarly conceived and practiced across sites and PPSL participants (e.g., student counselors and site supervisors). Accordingly, some student counselors experienced PPSL supervision as offering less stable ground on which to walk, which seemed to be sometimes confusing and frustrating for student counselors.

Ways of Learning

Ways of learning also emerged as a theme in this study, although less consistently than themes of direction and involvement. With regards to this theme, participants appeared to understand PPSL differently than: (a) non-field-based pre-practicum training and (b) practicum training. The following section illustrates these differences.

"[Pre-practicum service-learning] certainly gave me an opportunity to see what's really going on…, which can be different from what we're seeing in the textbook."

Interview and document data suggested that applied and conceptual ways of learning

were part of student counselors' pre-practicum training at MU. In the words of participants, applied ways of learning included "bring[ing] what's going on in the classroom alive," "see[ing] what's really going on," and "practicing." Pre-practicum service-learning was described in this way. In comparison, participants referred to conceptual ways of learning as "hearing about it" and "sitting and absorbing." Non-field-based pre-practicum training methods were described in this way.

Participants' accounts of PPSL at schools and community agencies suggested that PPSL was understood as an applied way of learning. An alumnus said that PPSL "made it real" in that "you [previously had] your head in a book and then you get out there [during PPSL] and you start to see some of the things around you" (AL 6). This alumnus later expanded on this idea by saying: "[During PPSL], I got to take all the stuff I was reading and learning from a textbook and watch how it works" (AL 6). In the eyes of this alumnus, PPSL seemed to give life to conceptual ways of learning. A similar view was offered by a counselor educator who said, "[PPSL] can really bring what's going on in the classroom alive for [student counselors]" (CE 2). A doctoral student coordinator provided an example of this point while commenting on student counselors' responses when they witness or use a counseling theory during PPSL: "Ahh! That's what that's about....Now it makes sense....I always swore I'd never be a behaviorist, but now I see why that theory works with this [particular client] population" (DS 2).

Pre-practicum service-learning appeared to be an applied way of learning not only because it was said to enliven course material, but also because it was believed to reveal the reality of professional counseling. The words of a counselor educator exemplified this point: "[During PPSL], they could really see what [counseling] was like" (CE 1). An

alumnus spoke of PPSL in the following way: “[I] gain[ed] knowledge about what different people do in the field—seeing what case managers do, seeing what school counselors do, seeing what people in agencies do” (AL 4). An alumnus said that PPSL was a “really great opportunity to…get exposed to what actually goes on in these different environments” (AL 3). Pre-practicum service-learning as a way of witnessing the real work of counseling professionals appeared to be echoed by a doctoral student coordinator who referred to PPSL as a “dose of reality” and a way for student counselors to have “a real candid look at” professional counseling (DS 2). The words of one student counselor whose written reflections of PPSL were reviewed for this study typified the idea of PPSL as experiencing the realities of professional counseling:

> This was also the first time I have ever worked with children. I must admit, at times I was overwhelmed by the energy and chaos that they naturally created. Kids screaming, crying, kicking chairs, standing on heads…[which was] all in a day’s work for the staff.

A third way that PPSL seemed to be an applied way of learning was it provided a context in which student counselors could practice counseling skills. This view was expressed in a variety of ways, and most of the related data came from doctoral student coordinator and counselor educators’ accounts. In response to a question about the merits of PPSL, a counselor educator said, “[PPSL] really allows [student counselors] to maybe apply some of what they’ve been learning” (CE 2). This point was echoed by the other counselor educator who stated**, “**[PPSL] provides a real context to practice the skills learned in class” (CE 1). The view of PPSL as a way to apply course knowledge seemed to be shared by a doctoral student coordinator. This doctoral student coordinator said that

the “point” of PPSL was to “connect the academic learning with practice in the community” (DS 1).

In comparison, non-field-based pre-practicum training methods seemed to be understood as conceptual ways of learning. The words of participants illustrated this idea. An alumnus spoke of non-field-based pre-practicum training as “sitting and absorbing,” having one’s “head in a book,” and “reading and learning from a textbook” (AL 6). Some other descriptions of non-field-based pre-practicum training methods appeared to not only suggest the idea of conceptual learning, but also a possible minimization of these ways of learning relative to applied ways of learning. For example, an alumnus said that one piece of advice for future student counselors participating in PPSL would be: “[Set aside] any kind of thoughts about what you’re going to do with a person before you meet them because there’s a lot of book learning that doesn’t apply to what you’re going to do with a client” (AL 1). This view of conceptual ways of learning as less valuable than applied ways of learning was shared by some counselor educators and doctoral student coordinators. A counselor educator referred to PPSL as “some of the best learning [student counselors] can do” (CE 1). This counselor educator also said that PPSL was “a pretty big learning experience that there is no way that [student counselors] would get just by sitting in a class reading a book” (CE 1). In talking about the process of appreciating how a counseling theory “fits,” a doctoral student coordinator remarked, “If they are just hearing about [a theory in class], it is like, ‘So. So what’” (DS 2).

Participants’ descriptions of training methods at MU suggested that PPSL was understood differently than non-field-based pre-practicum training. In particular,

participants' accounts suggested that PPSL was an applied way of learning, while other forms of pre-practicum training were understood as conceptual ways of learning.

"Gaining knowledge of the field" versus "Learning how to be comfortable…with a client." Just as learning about riding a bicycle is different than learning how to ride a bicycle, learning about counseling is different than learning how to provide counseling. Participants' accounts of PPSL and practicum training appeared to differ along these ways of learning, with PPSL generally understood as learning about counseling and practicum training as learning how to provide counseling. These distinctions between PPSL and practicum training seemed to fit across field and class components.

Pre-practicum service-learning as a means of learning about counseling was communicated in a variety of ways across participant groups. As indicated previously, alumni seemed to consider PPSL as a way to understand the counseling profession through observation of professionals and different levels of participation with clients and school students. In the words of an alumnus, PPSL was a way to observe "what's really going on in a real counselor's work" (AL 7). This view seemed to be shared counselor by educators and doctoral student coordinators. For example, a doctoral student coordinator stated that some student counselors come to understand the following aspects of professional counseling as a result of participating in PPSL: "I didn't realize there would be so many meetings…[or] this much paperwork…or how much time I'd be spending on the phone trying to track down a probation officer" (DS 3).

In classrooms incorporating PPSL, participants' descriptions of PPSL-related activities, papers, and discussions also appeared to demonstrate a focus on learning about counseling. Several different methods of student counselor reflection of PPSL were

discussed during interviews. Some of these methods were: class presentations, process groups, weekly journals, and class discussions. While alumni's accounts appeared to vary regarding the presence and importance of these reflection methods, the accounts tended to suggest that reflection emphasized student counselors' understanding of themselves as future counselors and understanding of the counseling profession. Moreover, student counselors' understandings seemed to be fostered by exploring how PPSL was experienced at different schools and community agencies. An alumnus provided the following description of what student counselors were asked to address during written reflection of PPSL:

> Where the site was at, did you like the site, what did the site do…what was that site all about, and what did you like about it, what did you not like about it, what exactly were your duties, and were you expected to do something more than you supposed to do? (AL 1)

Another alumnus appeared to refer to a similar process of written reflection:

> I think we had to turn in a weekly journal entry for that on our [PPSL] experiences and what we learned. It was basically just a check if we turned it in. [It was] about what we did that week and what we learned that week. What we liked? What we didn't like? And things like that. (AL 6)

According to some alumni, student counselors also completed class presentations related to PPSL, which seemed to be oral reports of what had been documented during written reflection. An alumnus said,

> There were times when we also presented the information to the entire class where we gave a summary of our experience, sort of a summary of the kinds of things that I

> said we were putting in the paper. So that each of us could hear what the other person was experiencing. And also have an opportunity to ask questions of other people about their experience. (AL 7)

An end-of-the semester group discussion led by COC staff was also mentioned by some participants as part of PPSL reflection. This group discussion was referred to as a "summary" (DS 2), a "process group" (DS 1), and a "debriefing" (AL 7). Generally, the group discussion seemed to be similarly focused on how PPSL was experienced by student counselors as well as what student counselors learned about themselves and the counseling profession. A counselor educator pointed toward two strengths of the group discussion: "It provides an opportunity for the [student counselors] to review their own experiences and integrate them…as well as provide [student counselors] the chance to hear about their peers' experiences" (CE 1).

It should be noted that, while rarer, some participants addressed components of PPSL that seemed to foster student counselors' knowledge of how to provide counseling. In other words, PPSL was not purely a way to learn about counseling, it also appeared to sometimes entail ways of learning how to provide counseling. For example, in the school counseling course, student counselors were required to carry out project as part of PPSL. According to interview and document data, this project called for student counselors to: (a) assess a particular need at their PPSL site that can be met by a counseling service, (b) design an intervention to meet that need, (c) implement the intervention, and (d) evaluate the effectiveness of the intervention. A few alumni also spoke to ways that PPSL was experienced as a method for learning how to carry out certain duties of a professional counselor. An alumnus' story exemplified this point:

> The service-learning…totally prepared me for my internship. I don't know what I would've done at my internship had I not had this amazing [PPSL] experience….Before [PPSL], I didn't know what a classroom presentation was, I'd never been in a school….By watching my [site supervisor] do it, I got to see how she interacted with the kids in terms of her formality or her just her manner of being [and] what types of things she talked about. When I got into my internship, I would just become her. I kind of embodied her. I would just, word for word, do what I had heard her do and it worked. And if I hadn't seen that, I wouldn't have known how [to] deal with kids who were talking…[or] how [to] deal with role plays. (AL 3)

In comparison to PPSL, practicum training appeared to be often understood as a way of fostering student counselors' knowledge about how to provide counseling. Alumni's descriptions of practicum training illustrated this point. An alumnus offered the following account about a typical day of practicum training:

> [You] come in, put your things down, and go get the file of the person who you were going to see….[You] go get one of your videotapes out of the cabinet and put it into the tape player and get that all set up. And then go out and greet your client and go into the room and do a 50-minute session. Then come out and go back into the little private room where your classmates and supervisors [were] and take the tape out and get some immediate feedback from supervisors and classmates about the session… about what went well or what the challenges were. (AL 3)

Another alumnus referred to practicum training as "starting the counseling process from scratch on our own as the counselors" (AL 7). This alumnus later made note of becoming more aware of the "details" of providing counseling services, such as the "intake process"

and “informed consent” (AL 7). Practicum training also seemed to expose student counselors to the experience of working with clients for an extended period of time. An alumnus remarked, “[During practicum training], I got to see how therapy works and how people can grow. Just week after week, watching [clients’] progress…and to be a part of that was really, really neat” (AL 4). From the perspective of these and other alumni, practicum training seemed to be experienced as carrying out the “real” work of professional counselors. For example, an alumnus stated that, during practicum training, “you’re for real working with people” and “you are actually working in the profession” (AL 1). Practicum training as a way to learn about how to provide counseling might have been best illustrated by the words of an alumnus who said that practicum training was about “learning how to do the notes, learning how to be comfortable, and learning how to work with your clients depending on their needs” (AL 6).

In practicum classrooms, alumni’s accounts suggested a similar emphasis on learning how to provide counseling. An alumnus mentioned that guest lecturers attended the practicum classroom and that these lectures would address different topics, such as “how to refer out if [a client’s presenting issue] is something way over your head and who to refer to” and “sand-tray” training (AL 5). Another alumnus relayed some comments made by the course instructor that seemed to reflect the how-to nature of practicum training: “Get [clients] to the core…listen to what they have to say and then lead them in that direction and then allow them to get in touch with their feelings and let them know it’s alright” (AL 1).

Alumni also mentioned that case presentations were part of their practicum training. Similar to other elements of practicum training, case presentations appeared to

reflect an emphasis on learning how to provide counseling services. Case presentations were described by an alumnus as "focus[ing] on one of our clients and present[ing] [the case] to our peers and our supervisors, doing as thorough as possible an examination in terms presenting problem, the treatment plan, and theoretical underpinnings of this approach" (AL 7). Another alumnus spoke about case presentations in the following way:

> About half way through [the semester], we started doing case presentations. So each student would do a case presentation—show a snippet of video about 10 minutes or 15 minutes and formulate the case and present the case and get feedback. (AL 3).

In all, PPSL and practicum training were described as contributing to student counselors' ways of learning. However, each training method appeared to contribute in different ways. Generally, PPSL was understood to address student counselors' learning about counseling. Meanwhile, practicum training appeared to emphasize student counselors' learning around how to provide counseling.

Time

While less frequently mentioned than the three previous themes, time was a fourth theme that emerged from the data. Across participant groups, accounts of PPSL seemed to include mention of time, such as finding time or not having enough time. This theme is explored in the subsequent paragraphs, beginning with some remarks about the context in which PPSL was carried out.

"It's just an awful lot to juggle." Pre-practicum service-learning, according to participants' accounts, was a required component in three graduate counselor education courses. Depending on the course, student counselors were asked to complete 20 or 30 hours of PPSL throughout a semester. Stories from some participants indicated that many

of the student counselors who participated in PPSL also had other personal and professional demands. One participant summarized the life circumstances of some student counselors at MU who carried out PPSL: “They were going to school, they were working, they were dating, [and] they had kids” (AL 5). A few participants’ accounts also suggested that: (a) many of the schools and community agencies only offered weekday hours in which student counselors could participate in PPSL and (b) student counselors were discouraged from waiting until the end of the semester to conduct PPSL.

As might be expected given the context in which PPSL occurred, some student counselors appeared to feel stressed by time requirements of PPSL. Responses to time pressure were communicated in a variety of ways around a multitude of areas. Some participants spoke directly to the challenge and frustration felt by student counselors carrying out PPSL. An alumnus talked about attempting to “squeeze [in]” double the hours of PPSL while taking Foundations of Counseling and School Counseling courses during the same semester (AL 3). This alumnus described this process as a “scheduling nightmare” (AL 3). Another alumnus said,

> One thing that was kind of a weakness of [PPSL]…[was] time. The time requirements were frustrating if you’re carrying a full load. I know you have to do [PPSL] more hours than just a few to get the full feel of it, but carrying a full load and having to do 30 hours in a semester was sometimes burdensome….[PPSL] added stress. That’s probably the biggest thing, it added stress. (AL 6)

Another alumnus seemed to share a similar view and stated that PPSL was “demanding in that it added an extra level of time and effort to what a typical course load would be” (AL 7). A doctoral student coordinator also referred to time as challenging to student

counselors carrying out PPSL: “Least surprising [about PPSL] is that students’ work and family commitments make scheduling required [PPSL] hours challenging.”

Finding time for PPSL during class activities and discussions also seemed challenging. When asked about reflective aspects of PPSL, a counselor educator said, “I always feel I didn’t do enough with [PPSL reflection]. Actually, we’re always running out of time” (CE 1). This counselor educator also identified lack of time as a limitation to the end-of-the-semester group discussion of PPSL: “Even if a whole class session is devoted to the group, it doesn’t afford each student very much time to share many of the experiences that they had [during PPSL]” (CE 1). A similar comment about the group discussion seemed to be offered by a doctoral student coordinator. This doctoral student coordinator said:

> Sometimes those classrooms are so big that that process group isn’t as effective as I would like it to be to tell you the truth. If we have two and a half hours and then there are 30 students, that is tough in my opinion….I’d like to see 10 or 12 students in a group so that we could really have some time because you’ll hear comments from students like, “Wow, I never knew about that placement and I’d like to do that one next time”….So I’d like to have…smaller groups because I think you could cover a lot more territory and do a lot more in depth look at the issues. (DS 2)

In addition, accounts by some participants seemed to speak to the ways that time aspects of PPSL were experienced by site supervisors and sites. A doctoral student coordinator said that sites “do all the dirty work” of allowing student counselors to shadow professional counselors for 20 or 30 hours during PPSL only to find out that some student counselors might not return for group practicum training or internship (DS

3). In other words, it seemed that this doctoral student coordinator understood that some sites might be upset by giving their time, but feeling like their time sacrifice was not returned by student counselors. Another alumnus spoke to how hard it might be for site supervisors to sacrifice their time to oversee student counselors' PPSL: "It is a pain in the neck for [sites]. They don't want [professional counselors] trying to find something for [student counselors] to do for a semester. It's hard" (AL 4). This alumnus later addressed what it might feel like to be in the shoes of a site supervisor during PPSL: "If [student counselors] weren't there actually doing internship, [but] just kind of following me around, that would probably be annoying" (AL 4).

An alumnus referred to a site supervisor who did not appear to have time to oversee PPSL. This alumnus said,

> [The site supervisor] wanted us to do this portfolio that she would be able to look at at the end of our semester to know that we had really done the job *because* [italics added] she didn't have time to go around with each of us to the classrooms [as we were completing PPSL]. (AL 5)

Participants' stories also suggested that student counselors used different strategies to deal with the stresses of time around their PPSL. Some student counselors conducted PPSL at their place of work or internship site. An alumnus described "falling into the assistant position" while carrying out PPSL at this alumnus' internship site (AL 6). In a similar way, a counselor educator spoke about a student counselor who carried out PPSL at his place of work. According to this counselor educator, the student counselor co-led a therapy group as part of PPSL. Other ways student counselors dealt with the stresses of time appeared to be: (a) remaining at the same site across courses

incorporating PPSL and/or (b) locating sites that were, for one reason or another, more convenient. Staying at the same site as a way to ease the time demands of PPSL appeared to be a topic of discussion among COC staff. In particular, a doctoral student coordinator said if student counselors were "growing…and challenging themselves" at the same site, COC staff would support their staying (DS 3). However, if the student counselors remained at the same site purely out of "convenience," then the student counselor might be encouraged by COC staff to make a change (DS 3).

The role of convenience in dealing with the stresses of time around PPSL was also addressed by other participants. A counselor educator suggested that some student counselors might endure negative experiences during PPSL because of time pressures. This counselor educator said:

> Time is of the essence. If it's a bad situation, it might be hard for them to switch gears, find another site. So, they have to put in the hours…even though they know it's not a good fit. Because it can be time consuming to find the right connections. (CE 2)

It also seemed that some student counselors chose certain schools or community agencies out of convenience. Evidence for this idea was provided in the stories of some alumni. An alumnus remarked,

> I don't even know how I ended up at [a particular agency for PPSL]. I think someone that I knew in a social context knew somebody who worked there. So I called and ended up not actually working with that woman, but I kind of liked it. (AL 3)

Another alumnus provided a similar story:

> That [school] really wasn't one of the [established PPSL] sites, but we have a family friend who'd been a counselor there for years and years, the school counselor. I sat in with her…[and] kind of learned about school counseling—figuring out GPAs [and] what courses kids need so they can graduate. (AL 4)

The words of two alumni exemplified the meaning of time and convenience in student counselors' site selection: "Basically, I was picking something that would fit my schedule, both my work and school schedule" (AL 2). Another alumnus remarked, "A lot of students just end up going wherever will take them" (AL 4).

Time also appeared to enter into how participants' perceived the overall value of PPSL. An alumnus, for example, said that PPSL was a "waste of time" because this alumnus had worked in the counseling field and was concurrently completing practicum training (AL 4). Another alumnus said, "Even though I wasted a lot of time at [the community agency] waiting for my supervisor to show up, it was still valuable" (AL 3).

Time also seemed to inform and be informed by the previously addressed theme of direction. The words of an alumnus and doctoral student coordinator exemplified this idea. The alumnus remarked,

> If [PPSL] is done in an organized fashion and it's done in a well-informed fashion, it can be extremely beneficial. But if it's just kind of a side note, "you need to fulfill this requirement," the students are just going to see it as a hassle. (AL 6)

Similarly, a doctoral student counselor said, "When professors don't stress the importance of [PPSL] and tie it into their requirements [and] topics in class, students marginalize its importance and resent the time commitment" (DS 2).

Time seemed to be a salient feature of PPSL for many of the participants in this study. Student counselors at MU were described as juggling many personal and professional responsibilities, which sometimes made finding time to initiate and carry out PPSL difficult and frustrating. Possibly as a way to address time constraints, student counselors periodically chose sites out of convenience. Time was also raised as meaningful for reflection of PPSL as well as for sites and site supervisors who were asked to give time to oversee student counselors carrying out PPSL.

Summary of Themes

Four themes emerged from interview and document data regarding student counselors' training experiences. *Direction* related to participants' accounts that suggested that efforts were made to instill direction around PPSL, but that PPSL was sometimes experienced by student counselors as unclear and/or different than expected. Another aspect of direction was that PPSL was described as providing a sense of direction from which student counselors could make subsequent academic and professional decisions. *Involvement* referred to accounts of PPSL and practicum training that suggested differences between the two training methods around student counselors' level of participation, feelings of responsibility, and supervision. Typically, PPSL was understood to entail less involvement than practicum training. *Ways of learning* spoke to descriptions of PPSL that included comparisons of PPSL to other ways of learning, namely non-field-based pre-practicum training and practicum training. Generally, PPSL was considered an applied way of learning, while non-field-based pre-practicum training methods were understood as conceptual ways of learning. With regard to PPSL-practicum training comparisons, PPSL was described as learning about counseling

whereas practicum training was portrayed as learning how to provide counseling. *Time* referred to participants' accounts of the time demands of PPSL. Time was addressed as meaningful to: (a) student counselors' completion of PPSL in the midst of competing responsibilities, (b) reflection of PPSL, and (c) site supervision.

Responses to Research Questions

The framework below represents the researcher's insights into the research questions based on the emergent themes. As mentioned in a previous section, research questions specific to the perspectives of counselor educators could not be answered (as originally written). However, this study's sample of counselor educators did allow for an illustration of the views of counselor education faculty members who were familiar with PPSL processes and who seemed aware of PPSL's potential effects.

Given the overlap across participant groups, research questions were combined by areas of focus. The areas of focus were: (a) specific aspects that define PPSL, (b) perceived effects of PPSL on student counselors' overall development, and (c) comparisons of PPSL and practicum training. Points of contradiction within and across participant groups are also illustrated.

Defining Aspects of Pre-Practicum Service-Learning

Across participant groups, PPSL was often described and understood according to student counselors' activities and felt experiences at schools and community agencies. Also emerging from participants' descriptions were statements about reflection of PPSL and the Community Outreach Center's (COC) role in the set up and execution of PPSL. The following discussion is divided into three sections: (a) PPSL as work-based learning, (b) reflection of PPSL, and (c) COC.

Pre-Practicum Service-Learning as Work-Based Learning

Work-based learning "expose[s] students to different types of jobs and help[s] students learn and apply skills necessary to the working world" (Becker, 2003, p. 5). Many authors consider service-learning as one of many forms of work-based learning (e.g., Becker; Brown, 2003; South Carolina State Department, 1999). The present study acknowledges that service-learning can be a distinct method of work-based learning, and also suggests that PPSL at Monroe University (MU) seemed to resemble two other forms of work-based learning, namely apprenticing and cooperative education (Hamilton & Hamilton, 1997).

Pre-practicum service-learning at MU resembled apprenticing in four ways: (a) student counselors observed professional counselors, (b) student counselors performed professional counseling tasks, (c) student counselors learned from observing and participating in professional counseling activities, and (d) student counselors were supervised during PPSL and the scope of their duties was restricted. Pre-practicum service-learning was similar to cooperative education in that student counselors' PPSL was varied. Across participant groups, some differences appeared to exist regarding how student counselors' experienced PPSL. These differences are explored at the end of this section.

Professional observation. Beginning apprentices typically begin as observers (Hamilton & Hamilton, 1997). Some student counselors conducting PPSL seemed to fulfill similar roles. Participants in this study described observational aspects of PPSL in a variety of ways, such as being a "fly on the wall," "shadowing," and "puppy dog[ging] along and watching."

Professional activity. Another way that PPSL seemed similar to apprenticing was through student counselors' participation in professional tasks (Hamilton & Hamilton, 1997). At schools, for example, some student counselors carried out classroom presentations with school counselors and educated students about issues such as attending college, managing conflict, and academic scheduling. At community agencies, some student counselors co-facilitated therapy groups with professional counselors.

Learning. Apprenticing, like many forms of work-based learning (Brown, 2003), involves the novice undergoing learning by witnessing and engaging in the activities of the profession. Student counselors' process of learning through PPSL seemed to come in many ways, such as observing the realities of professional counseling, practicing counseling skills, and understanding course material in school and community agency contexts. In addition, through PPSL, student counselors appeared to better understand their professional interests and non-interests.

Supervised and restricted work. Student counselors' PPSL was designed to be supervised and restricted, which was the fifth way that PPSL resembled apprenticing (Hamilton & Hamilton, 1997). Student counselors seemed to usually conduct work activities in the presence of supervision and/or at the guidance of their supervisors. In addition, PPSL involved observation of and participation in professional counseling activities. When student counselors' played an active role in service delivery, they typically did not take part in professional counseling activities that were beyond their level of training. However, when student counselors participated in activities reserved for more trained counselors (i.e., practica students, interns, or counseling professionals), they were usually engaged in the activities with professional counselors.

Varied work. Hamilton and Hamilton (1997) described cooperative education as distinct from apprenticing in that cooperative education plans "are often customized for a particular student in a particular site" ("Youth Apprenticeship and Cooperative Education," ¶ 2). Reminiscent of this aspect of cooperative education, student counselors appeared to experience PPSL in a variety of ways. Numerous factors seemed to shape PPSL, including student counselors' comfort and interest level, services carried out by the sites and/or site supervisors, and characteristics of the client population. Also informing student counselors' activities during PPSL were participants' understanding of PPSL (e.g., student counselors' involvement and site supervision), time, and PPSL-related course assignments.

Pre-practicum service-learning as work-based learning: Differences across participant groups. For the most part, consensus across participant groups existed regarding three ways that PPSL resembled apprenticing (i.e., professional observation, professional activity, and learning). However, participant groups appeared to differ at times in their thoughts about PPSL as varied and PPSL as supervised and restricted.

In particular, while counselor educators and doctoral student coordinators seemed to view PPSL as varied in a way that was purposeful and clear, alumni appeared to consider varied aspects of PPSL as sometimes unstructured and confusing. Some alumni mentioned that they did not know what to expect during PPSL and that they had to find their own way. Meanwhile, doctoral student coordinators and counselor educators spoke in ways suggesting that: (a) preventative measures were in place to minimize confusion and (b) when student counselors were unclear during PPSL, situations were usually resolved efficiently and appropriately.

With regard to PPSL as supervised, some alumni's accounts appeared to indicate that student counselors periodically operated outside the presence or purview of supervision. These stories seemed to conflict with viewpoints offered by counselor educators and doctoral student coordinators that student counselors were highly supervised. In addition, regarding PPSL as restricted, doctoral student coordinators and counselor educators appeared to contend that PPSL involved student counselors observing professional counselors or conducting activities commensurate with the student counselors' competence and comfort levels. In contrast, some accounts by alumni seemed to suggest that PPSL occasionally entailed student counselors engaging in activities beyond their level of training and comfort.

Reflection of Pre-Practicum Service-Learning

Across participant groups, the bulk of the data spoke to field-based aspects of PPSL. However, reflection of PPSL at MU was also asked about and addressed in interviews and documents reviewed for this study. This section includes a discussion of all participants' accounts of PPSL-related class discussions, written reflection, and end-of-the-semester process groups.

C*lass discussions*. The presence and importance of class discussions of PPSL seemed to vary throughout the interview data. At times, it appeared that PPSL was explicitly addressed during classes and tied to the course material. For example, one participant provided a few examples of how PPSL was integrated into class discussions. Another participant referred to this aspect of PPSL reflection as "comprehensive." However, at other times, it seemed that PPSL was seldom addressed in classrooms

throughout the semester. When asked broadly about reflective aspects of PPSL, some participants mentioned only written forms of reflection.

Written reflection. Written reflection of PPSL was addressed by most participants in this study. Written reflection was referred to in many ways, such as "reaction papers," "progress reports," and "weekly journals." These reaction papers seemed to have been integrated throughout the semester. One alumnus said that student counselors were asked to respond to questions such as, "What it was like when you first went in there" and "What did you get out of the situation." In addition, it seemed that student counselors also wrote summaries of their PPSL. A document reviewed for this study indicated the following summary questions asked of student counselors regarding PPSL:

1. Name the agency where you provided service and describe what you did there.
2. Describe an incident or tell a story that occurred during your service learning experience that is meaningful to you.
3. What have you felt, learned, observed, or become aware of through this experience?
4. How did your service-learning relate to your degree, major, or career?
5. What did you learn about your community? What did you learn about yourself?
6. Do you plan to continue working with the agency after completing the requirements of service-learning?
7. Do you have any suggestions for improving the service-learning experience at MU?

End-of-the-semester process groups. Community Outreach Center staff facilitated group discussions of PPSL for each course at the end of the semester. These

group discussions were described as “process groups,” “summary [groups],” and “debriefing[s].” The composition of these groups varied across participants’ accounts. One participant said that the class was divided into teams of six for the process groups, while another participant seemed to say that the process group included the entire class. It appeared that doctoral student coordinators and counselor educators considered process groups as a more salient feature of reflection of PPSL than alumni did. On the whole, the process groups were described as opportunities for student counselors to: (a) summarize their own experience of PPSL by addressing the “high points and low points” and (b) hear from peers about their experiences of PPSL.

Community Outreach Center

Based on a review of the literature, there seemed to be few graduate counseling programs incorporating PPSL. Even fewer graduate counseling programs appeared to include a structure like Community Outreach Center (COC) that facilitated the organization and execution of PPSL carried out by student counselors. Somewhat surprisingly to this researcher, few alumni participants mentioned administrative efforts of COC. However, most participants in this study, including alumni, referred to PPSL as “CO” rather than “service-learning” or “pre-practicum service-learning,” suggesting that COC shaped how participants understood and described PPSL at MU. In light of COC’s apparently unique role in the coordination of PPSL as well as participants’ tendency to refer to PPSL as CO, the following paragraphs shed light on COC’s part in executing PPSL at MU.

Descriptions of COC’s administrative efforts are drawn mostly from interviews with doctoral student coordinators. In brief, COC staff appeared to facilitate PPSL by

carrying out the following activities: (a) orientation, (b) matchmaking, (c) problem-solving, and (d) quality control.

Orientation. Administering PPSL seemed to be a continuous responsibility. At the beginning of every semester, COC staff visited the three courses at MU incorporating PPSL to explain the "COC requirements" and provide student counselors with basic information such as "how the semester will proceed, when they need to go be confirmed on the [PPSL] site, when site visits are made [by COC staff], and when the process group will be."

Also at the beginning of the semester, COC staff appeared to orient student counselors to PPSL by supplying them with a list of schools and community agencies. In the present study, a site list from spring 2004 was reviewed. All sites listed in the document indicated the site name, a contact person, and the site address. Many of the site listings also indicated hours when student counselors could complete PPSL and the types of activities student counselors could carry out (e.g., "classroom presentations," "opportunities to shadow [a] counselor," or "assist with child care"). The site listing also specified that typical PPSL activities included "shadowing a counselor, co-facilitating groups, giving psycho-educational presentations or providing administrative assistance." In bold print, a message read that student counselors "will <u>not</u> provide counseling services" as part of their PPSL.

Matchmaking. Although student counselors ultimately chose their PPSL sites, COC staff appeared to aid the selection process by playing the role of matchmaker. "Goodness of fit" seemed to be a facilitating factor involved in creating positive PPSL experiences for student counselors, sites, and site supervisors. Community Outreach

Center staff appeared to contribute to the matching process by educating student counselors about the different activities available across sites as well as informing student counselors and sites about what student counselors could and could not do while completing PPSL.

Another way that COC staff attempted to create a suitable match seemed to be by gathering information about student counselors and sites, and using that information to help pair student counselors to sites. Community Outreach Center staff held conversations with student counselors and asked questions like, “What are you most interested in?” Some student counselors, according to one doctoral student coordinator, “want[ed] to match their [professional] interests and some…want[ed] to confront their fears.” During conversations between COC staff and student counselors, COC staff also seemed to seek out information around student counselors’ interpersonal styles, which one doctoral student coordinator believed helped to make more appropriate site recommendations. Community Outreach Center staff also appeared to acquire matchmaking information while making site visits at the end of each semester.

Another aspect of matchmaking that COC staff seemed to consider was the appropriateness of student counselors’ choices to stay at the same site across different courses. In particular, one doctoral student said that if student counselors were “growing…and challenging themselves” at the same site, COC staff would support their staying. However, if the student counselors remained at the same site purely out of “convenience,” then the student counselor might be encouraged by COC staff to make a change.

Problem-solving. The process of administering PPSL for COC staff also seemed to include problem-solving. Problem-solving by COC staff appeared to revolve around questions or concerns raised by student counselors throughout the PPSL process. As suggested above in the matchmaking discussion, COC staff sought to create suitable student counselor-site matches. However, despite these efforts, some student counselors appeared to "struggle" with their initial site selections. In these cases, COC staff provided student counselors with information about a better match.

Community Outreach Center staff also appeared to serve as problem-solvers once student counselors settled into their PPSL sites. One doctoral student coordinator provided an example in which a COC colleague intervened in a situation where a student counselor "felt she was capable of doing more than the site supervisor was giving her to do." An example was also given in which a COC staff member role played different ways that a student counselor could address a concern with the site supervisor.

Quality control. Also emerging from interview and document data was that COC staff operated as quality controllers of PPSL. The apparent goal of quality control was to help ensure that PPSL "work[ed] to the best of everybody's benefit," which seemed to include student counselors, MU, schools, and community agencies. Quality control seemed to entail two activities: (a) informing PPSL participants of general guidelines and (b) assessing the degree to which the actual execution of PPSL matched the set guidelines.

Some of the methods used to inform PPSL participants of general guidelines have previously been described, such as supplying site supervisors and student counselors with packets that outlined typical PPSL activities that student counselors could conduct. In the

packets, site supervisors and student counselors were also provided with a framework for understanding the rationale of PPSL through COC (i.e., "'bridging the gap' between the university and the community") and the objectives of PPSL (e.g., "to create quality field experiences for counseling students throughout their training" and "to provide the students with multidisciplinary consultation opportunities while participating in the CO"). Community Outreach Center staff also appeared to deliver verbal messages to student counselors about "the parameters for what was an acceptable [site] placement." For example, one doctoral student coordinator emphasized to student counselors, "You're not going to be expected to go in and all of the sudden [your site supervisor] walk[s] out and you're left with a client."

A second component of quality control seemed to involve assessing the degree to which PPSL was experienced by student counselors and site supervisors aligned with participants' expectations and guidelines established by COC. One doctoral student coordinator said, "We're always trying to make sure [PPSL] is working here or it's working there, and trying to stay on top of it if it doesn't." These assessments appeared to be conducted throughout the semester as well as during COC staff's site visits at the end of the semester to talk with site supervisors.

Community Outreach Center staff also conducted summative written evaluations of PPSL, which appeared to be another method of quality control. Site supervisors rated student counselors along several dimensions (e.g., time commitment, initiative, and ethical practice). Student counselors rated their experience with the COC, which included items about the "quality of [their] site placement experience", and "support from the COC staff." Student counselors evaluations of the COC also included open-ended

questions, such as, “Please indicate what your site experience consisted of” and, “Overall, what are the advantages/disadvantages of service-learning?”

Perceived Effects of Pre-Practicum Service-Learning on Student Counselors' Overall Development

Earlier in the manuscript, the undergraduate service-learning literature on student development was divided into academic/professional and personal/social areas. In the present study of service-learning at the graduate level, participants' data seemed centered on student counselors' academic/professional development. In particular, the data appeared to point toward PPSL as a process by which student counselors achieved their professional bearings.

Professional Bearings

Stories told by participants suggested that PPSL helped student counselors to gain their professional bearings. The particular ways in which PPSL was deemed to facilitate this process are as follows: (a) PPSL helped student counselors become familiar with professional counseling roles and environments; (b) PPSL offered student counselors an opportunity to carry out professional activities; (c) PPSL encouraged student counselors to assess their professional interests; and (d) PPSL granted student counselors a chance to network within the counseling field.

Familiarity with professional counseling. Pre-practicum service-learning at MU was incorporated into the introductory course for counselor education master's students as well as two other courses that many student counselors enrolled in prior to practica or internships. Accordingly, many of the student counselors who participated in PPSL were believed to be somewhat unfamiliar with different aspects of professional counselors'

work. An alumnus said that beginning student counselors were “green, very green” at this point in their training.

Pre-practicum service-learning seemed to expand and deepen student counselors’ familiarity with professional counseling. Participants said that PPSL provided student counselors with “a dose of reality” as well as a chance to “see what’s out there.” As an example of this point, a doctoral student coordinator said, “[Student counselors] get to see everything [during PPSL]….[They] get to see how the whole system works—the bureaucracy, the character of the environment that [they] are in, [and] all kinds of different dimensions that they get to see.” Moreover, because student counselors could carry out PPSL at multiple sites during their graduate career, it was also said that they benefited from learning about different work environments and client populations. Student counselors’ process of becoming familiar with professional counseling work settings also appeared to occur during class discussions and the end-of-the-semester process groups. In the words of an alumnus, “Hearing what other people were doing and what they were experiencing [during PPSL] was very helpful to also let me know different aspects of counseling out in the field.”

Participation in professional activities. Another way that PPSL seemed to foster student counselors’ process of gaining their professional bearings was by offering them an opportunity to conduct some professional counseling activities, such as providing recreational therapy, co-facilitating therapy groups, and giving psycho-educational presentations. In addition, student counselors appeared to experience other professional activities during PPSL such as managing professional relationships. As an example of managing on-site relationships, one doctoral student coordinator referred to a situation

where a student counselor "work[ed] through" a potentially contentious situation with her site supervisor where the two parties arrived at "a real place of mutual respect and understanding."

Assessment of professional interests. Participants' data also appeared to suggest that PPSL encouraged student counselors to better understand their professional interests and non-interests. An alumnus made the following remarks about PPSL: "[It was] very useful to actually go out into the field and have a chance to just observe and see what's out there and what you might be interested in." Some participants mentioned that, through PPSL, student counselors had a better understanding of whether or not school counseling suited them. Student counselors also appeared to draw on PPSL to make assessments of themselves as future professionals. Pre-practicum service-learning, according to some participants, seemed to allow student counselors to understand their own comfort levels in different work environments.

In a related way, it also seemed to be the case that participants believed that student counselors' considerations and assessments of what they liked and disliked during PPSL shaped their perspectives about how to proceed professionally. A counselor educator stated that PPSL could: (a) reinforce or change student counselors' decisions about school counseling as a professional option or (b) provide an opportunity for student counselors who had not previously considered school counseling as a professional option.

Networking within the counseling field. The fourth way PPSL appeared to facilitate student counselors' process of gaining their professional bearings was by offering student counselors an opportunity to build a professional network. This point seemed to be made most explicitly by doctoral student coordinators. Part of the

networking process appeared to occur among student counselors as they learned more about what their peers were engaged in during PPSL. During a process group at the end of the semester, one doctoral student coordinator recalled conversations where student counselors made comments such as, “I’d like to do this with you in group practicum,” or, “If you are going to be [at that site], maybe we would work good [*sic*] together.”

Doctoral student coordinators also referred to networking occur between student counselors and site supervisors during PPSL. As one doctoral student coordinator mentioned, student counselors “are able to develop relationships with their site supervisors” over the course of 20 or 30 hours at schools or community agencies. The positive relationships that sometimes developed between student counselors and site supervisors appeared to be helpful because it allowed student counselors to “meet people in the field that [*sic*]will be valuable to [them] later on.”

Comparisons of Pre-Practicum Service-Learning and Practicum Training

Previous research of PPSL in graduate counselor training conceptualized PPSL as distinct from practicum training. However, little is known about how PPSL participants compare the two training methods. In the present study, participants’ accounts suggested that PPSL and practicum training tended to be conceptualized differently. Some similarities also arose. Both similarities and differences are illustrated below.

Three points should be noted before continuing. First, contrary to the researcher’s expectations, counselor educators in this study expressed hesitancy and a lack of familiarity with practicum training at MU. As such, counselor educators’ views of practicum training will not be presented. Second, limited data were gathered around group practicum training at MU, thus the focus of the following discussion is PPSL and

individual practicum training. Remaining consistent with earlier segments of this manuscript, the general term “practicum training” will be used. Third, neither counselor educators nor doctoral student coordinators provided data on both PPSL and practicum training. Accordingly, only alumni’s accounts of these two training methods will be included in this section.

Pre-Practicum Service-Learning as Different from Practicum Training

Several questions were asked of alumni throughout this study to learn more about how student counselors experienced and conceptualized PPSL and practicum training. Typically, the two training activities were perceived as different. For example, alumni described PPSL and practicum training as “very different” and “totally different.” With respect to differences, emerging from alumni’s stories appeared to be a distinction between student counselors’ level of involvement during PPSL and practicum training, with PPSL requiring less involvement than practicum training. Another identified difference between the two training methods appeared to be related to their structure, with PPSL as less structured than practicum training.

Student counselor involvement. When asked to compare PPSL and practicum training, alumni usually responded in ways suggesting that PPSL required less involvement than practicum training. Analysis of alumni’s accounts of the two training methods seemed to indicate that PPSL entailed less involvement in terms of student counselors’ participation, feelings of responsibility, and supervision. These three areas of involvement are illustrated in this section.

During PPSL, student counselors carried out a variety of activities. Some of student counselors’ activities while conducting PPSL were: co-facilitating therapy

groups, observing clinical sessions, visiting with service recipients in non-clinical settings, providing psycho-educational presentations, shadowing a professional counselor, and performing administrative work. Alumni seemed to understand these activities as introductory steps into professional counseling and commensurate with their novice level of training. An alumnus made a comment that appeared to speak to student counselors' involvement during PPSL "Watching a counselor do a classroom presentation [during PPSL] is very different than having to go do it yourself." Other descriptions of PPSL by alumni appeared consistent with this understanding. For example, alumni referred to PPSL as "baby practicum," "getting my feet wet," and "a tip of the iceberg." In comparison, alumni seemed to hold a different conceptualization of practicum training at MU. During practicum training, alumni's accounts suggested that the bulk of their activity was providing one-on-one counseling to clients who presented with a range of clinical issues, from depression to addiction to childhood sexual abuse. Alumni's descriptions of their activity level during practicum training appeared different from and more involved than PPSL. In particular, alumni considered practicum training as "actually doing counseling" as well as being "thrown in the pot" or "thrown in the water."

In a similar way, alumni's accounts of the two training methods seemed to suggest a difference with regard to student counselors' feelings of responsibility. In general, alumni appeared to believe that student counselors felt less responsibility during PPSL than practicum training. While participating in PPSL, alumni often appeared to perceive the ultimate responsibility for client care and service delivery to be in the hands of their site supervisors or other professional counselors at schools or community

agencies. An alumnus remarked, “You’re not going to be taking the whole school to the auditorium and teaching them something [during PPSL]. It’s sort of like you’re in kindergarten [or] first grade.” This alumnus’ comments seemed to reflect the idea that student counselors participating in PPSL did not carry the responsibility of being professionals, but rather felt that they could experience the counseling profession as learners.

It seemed that alumni had a different understanding of responsibility while conducting practicum training. During practicum training, alumni’s stories suggested that student counselors felt accountable for the well-being of their clients as well as the processes and outcomes of therapy. These feelings of responsibility appeared to be part of alumni’s description of practicum training as “more intense” than PPSL. The words of an alumnus seemed to exemplify how differently the two training activities were perceived with regard to feelings of responsibility. This alumnus said, “[PPSL] wasn’t as demanding [as practicum training]. We weren’t expected to carry most of the responsibility of the counseling that was going on [during PPSL].”

Alumni’s descriptions of PPSL and practicum training also appeared to indicate differences with regard to supervision. In general, supervision of PPSL was understood to be less involved than supervision of practicum training. Pre-practicum service-learning supervision seemed to be a process in which student counselors learned about professional counseling by shadowing, assisting, and/or collaborating with professional counselors. Moreover, the focus of PPSL supervision did not appear to be on student counselors’ delivery of service to clients or school students. In comparison, practicum supervision seemed to involve instructors and doctoral student supervisors observing

student counselors' sessions and providing them with written and verbal feedback following every session. The focus of practicum supervision appeared to be on student counselors' self-knowledge and delivery of counseling services.

Structure. In an earlier segment of this manuscript, PPSL was compared to practicum training as they related to the emergent theme of direction. This section speaks to a similar distinction between the two training methods. Across alumni reports, PPSL seemed to be less structured than practicum training.

Student counselors at MU carried out PPSL in at least two graduate counselor education courses. Attempts to provide structure to PPSL were described in detail by doctoral student coordinators and, to a somewhat lesser degree, counselor educators. Despite these attempts to structure PPSL, alumni's descriptions seemed to suggest that PPSL was sometimes experienced as confusing and lacking structure. Alumni said of PPSL: "[You had to] find your way," there was a "lack of direction at the site," and "[PPSL] wasn't spelled out well." In comparison, practicum training was uniformly described by most alumni and the training method appeared to be organized in ways that were clearly understood. When alumni referred to practicum training, there appeared to be a feeling of safety and comfort around knowing what was expected of them and knowing that their supervisors were present and attentive.

Pre-Practicum Service-Learning as Similar to Practicum Training

As suggested above, alumni typically described PPSL and practicum training as distinct. However, similarities between PPSL and practicum training also emerged from some alumni's accounts. In particular, both training methods seemed to be considered "real" and "first steps" into the counseling profession.

Pre-practicum service-learning placed student counselors in professional counseling contexts at schools and community agencies. Alumni's accounts suggested that student counselors experienced PPSL as witnessing and/or participating in the realities of the work of professional counselors, including working with clients as well as operating within a work environment. In a similar way, it appeared that alumni considered practicum training as real professional counseling work. Practicum training, in the eyes of alumni, was real in that it placed them in positions to provide one-on-one counseling services and carry the bulk of responsibility for clients' care. The idea of practicum training as real was illustrated by an alumnus who commented on feeling the "tremendous amount of responsibility" that coincides with knowing, "I'm the person who's going to be working with [the client] in this counseling relationship."

Pre-practicum service-learning and practicum training were also similar in that they appeared to be understood by alumni to be student counselors' introductory steps into the counseling profession. Beginning student counselors at MU were sometimes described by alumni as inexperienced and lacking knowledge about professional counseling. Pre-practicum service-learning appeared to allow student counselors to have some exposure to their future work without placing too many demands upon them related to what they do or their feelings of responsibility. Consistent with the idea of PPSL as introductory, an alumnus referred to PPSL as a "toe in the water type thing." Similarly, alumni seemed to understand practicum training as experiencing professional counselors' work while also having support and close supervision. An alumnus appeared to speak to practicum training as an early part of working as a professional: "I always had a safety

net….[The session] was always taped so I could review it afterward. I always had [my supervisor] to review it."

Summary of Responses to Research Questions

Pre-practicum service-learning was described in ways that highlighted student counselors' experiences at schools and community agencies. It appeared that PPSL resembled work-based learning, particularly apprenticing and cooperative education, in several ways. For example, like apprenticing, student counselors observed and participated in professional tasks. Moreover, similar to cooperative education, PPSL at MU was individualized based on a variety of factors, such as the abilities of the student counselor and the activities carried out at the site. Other aspects of PPSL that emerged from participants' accounts were reflection of PPSL as well as the role of COC in organizing and executing PPSL. Also emerging from the data seemed to be participants' understanding of PPSL as a way that student counselors' achieved their professional bearings. This process appeared to include witnessing the realities of professional counselors' work and networking with professional counselors. Finally, alumni's accounts of PPSL and practicum training suggested that the two training methods were usually understood differently, with PPSL as less involved and less structured than practicum training. Points of similarity between PPSL and practicum training, while rarer and less developed, seemed to be that both training methods were "real" forms of training and both were early steps into the counseling profession.

Serendipitous Findings

Two previously unexpected findings emerged from the data. First, some differences seemed to exist around how PPSL was experienced by student counselors at

schools and community agencies. Second, student counselors sometimes conducted PPSL at the same site and during the same semester as their internship or group practicum. These serendipitous findings are outlined below.

Student counselors appeared to sometimes experience PPSL differently depending on whether they were at a school or a community agency. The apparent difference in student counselors' experiences at schools and community agencies, while unforeseen, was understandable given the context in which PPSL occurred. In particular, PPSL seemed to be guided by a COC guideline indicating that student counselors "will not provide counseling services," which appeared to be directed by legal and ethical beliefs about competent clinical practice. Given this parameter, schools seemed to offer student counselors a wider range of ways in which to participate in the realities of professional counseling without infringing on that COC guideline. For example, student counselors carrying out PPSL at schools gave class presentations, aided teachers in the classroom, and assisted with academic advising. In comparison, because community agencies appeared more likely to emphasize counseling as a primary method of service delivery, fewer opportunities seemed to exist for student counselors to both (a) adhere to COC's guideline and ethical guidelines and (b) interact directly with service recipients or assist professional counselors as they conducted daily activities.

A second unexpected finding emerging from the data was that some student counselors carried out PPSL during the same semester and at the same site as their internship or group practicum. This was surprising in part because the researcher assumed that student counselors involved in PPSL at MU would be at the early stages of their course of study and thus, not far enough along in their training to carry out

internship or group practicum training. However, data suggested that some student counselors enrolled in courses out of sequence, for various reasons such as work responsibilities or financial considerations, and that this created overlap between the training methods. Also surprising was that COC staff and course instructors allowed student counselors to conduct PPSL and internship or group practicum training activities at the same site. It seemed to the researcher, based on previous experiences as an instructor and student of service-learning, that it could be confusing for student counselors, sites, and facilitators of PPSL to distinguish student counselors' activities during one training method from another. In fact, some confusion arose during initial data analysis for this study as the researcher attempted to separate participants' descriptions of PPSL from other training activities conducted by student counselors at the same school or community agency.

Feedback from Verification Techniques

Member checks were used to assess and strengthen the accuracy of the data as well as the credibility of the researcher's findings. As part of follow-up interviews via e-mail, all participants were invited to clarify incomplete or confusing data gathered during first round telephone interviews. Nine of the twelve participants responded to follow-up interview questions. One participant, for example, originally said that PPSL affected the "direction that you were thinking you wanted to go." During the follow-up interview, this participant explained that "'direction' meant whether I wanted to choose the school or agency track, as well as sub-categories within these [tracks], [such as] elementary versus high school [or] substance abuse versus trauma-focused agency." Another participant was asked during the follow-up interview to expand on her comment

that PPSL should be “mandatory.” Other participants were encouraged to talk more about reports such as “[PPSL] makes the classroom learning real” or that practicum training at MU was “hands on.” In general, participants’ responses to follow-up interview questions: (a) shed further light on how PPSL and practicum training at MU were understood and experienced and (b) provided evidence that often supported, but sometimes challenged, the researcher’s preliminary ideas about the data.

In addition, the researcher obtained feedback from four research participants regarding this study’s findings. Each participant reviewer was provided: (a) a summary of the emergent themes, (b) a summary of the responses to the research questions that guided the present study, and (c) one of the four themes that emerged from the data. The researcher attempted to elicit constructive feedback by pairing participant reviewers who seemed to be advocates of PPSL with findings that addressed negative aspects of PPSL at MU. Participant reviewers who appeared to have a pessimistic stance of PPSL were given findings that highlighted positive aspects of PPSL at MU. Two participant reviewers expressed some concern about the apparent preponderance of “negative” findings related to PPSL. One of these two reviewers offered potential explanations for this study’s negative findings (e.g., the motivations of some participants). Some of this participant reviewer’s hypotheses will be addressed in the limitations section of this manuscript. The other participant reviewer who expressed concern about the negative findings also mentioned that the study “included some good information” and that the themes that emerged were “important, and valid, factors” shaping PPSL at MU. A third participant reviewer remarked that the emergent themes “make sense.” This reviewer also said that, while the researcher’s distinction between learning about counseling (PPSL) and learning

how to provide counseling (practicum) was not “absolute,” it was a “reasonable generalization.” A fourth participant reviewer said that the researcher presented “an accurate representation of [PPSL].” This reviewer also remarked that the researcher’s description of practicum training at MU was “right on” and that the researcher “did an excellent job portraying both [PPSL and practicum] programs.”

Finally, a qualitative research expert provided feedback regarding segments of this study’s findings. The qualitative research expert was provided three interview transcripts and one of the four themes that emerged from the data. This reviewer was to: (a) offer feedback on how the findings reflected participants’ voices as well as, (b) challenge any of the researcher’s assumptions that had surreptitiously made their way into the findings, (c) ferret out statements that were not supported by the data, and (d) question findings that could have interpreted differently. This reviewer suggested that the researcher’s interpretations fit the data, and also provided alternative interpretations to add complexity to the researcher’s analyses. The researcher reexamined this study’s findings in light of the reviewer’s alternative interpretations and integrated some of the reviewer’s insights into the findings and discussion sections.

CHAPTER V

DISCUSSION

This study originated from the researcher's curiosity about what pre-practicum service-learning (PPSL) might look like and feel like as a method of training student counselors. Document review as well as qualitative interviews with counselor educators, doctoral student coordinators, and recent alumni responded to that curiosity. The purpose of the study was to articulate a thorough description of PPSL in the context of graduate counselor education in order to identify: (a) the perceived effects (or lack of effect) of PPSL on student counselors' overall development and (b) the way PPSL participants compare PPSL to practicum training.

The following discussion is divided into four sections. The first section places this study's findings in the context of the researcher's expectations and previous research on service-learning, graduate counselor training, and the use of service-learning as a method of graduate counselor training. The second part of the discussion addresses the limitations of the study. The third section explores the implications of this study's findings for graduate counselor training. The last segment explores directions for future research.

Placing Findings in Context

The previous chapter organized findings around emergent themes and the research questions that guided this study. The current section resembles that format, beginning with a discussion of the emergent themes—*direction*, involvement, *ways of learning*, and *time*—placed in the context of the researcher's expectations and the extant literature. Following the emergent themes, a contextual picture is provided for the researcher's

insights into the research questions. These research questions addressed: (a) specific aspects that define PPSL, (b) perceived effects of PPSL on student counselors, and (c) comparisons of PPSL and practicum training.

Emergent Themes

Four themes emerged from interview and document data. These four themes were direction, involvement, ways of learning, and time. Below, these themes are placed within the context of previous research and the researcher's expectations.

Direction

Emerging most prominently from the data was a theme of direction. Accounts by doctoral student coordinators and counselor educators reflected attempts to instill direction around the set-up and execution of PPSL. Some of the efforts to create an agreed upon road map for PPSL were: (a) providing site supervisors and student counselors with an information packet outlining the rationale and goals of PPSL, (b) trying to standardize PPSL across the three courses in which it was incorporated, and (c) supplying student counselors with a list of potential PPSL sites that outlined student counselors' duties at most sites and the hours student counselors could carry out PPSL. These attempts to provide direction, made mostly by COC staff, were understandable given the vast number of schools, community agencies, and student counselors involved in PPSL. Moreover, these efforts seemed consistent with what was described in the service-learning literature as effective practice. In particular, Honnet and Poulsen (1989) proposed that effective service-learning practice "articulates clear service and learning goals for everyone involved" and "clarifies the responsibilities of each person and organization involved" ("Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and

Learning," ¶ 3 and ¶ 5). Finally, efforts to instill direction might have been implemented to help stakeholders (e.g., student counselors and site supervisors) differentiate PPSL from practicum training.

Despite attempts by COC staff to clarify and provide direction for PPSL, some alumni in this study suggested that PPSL was sometimes experienced by student counselors as unclear and confusing. Interview data seemed to indicate that some student counselors might have felt misinformed or uninformed at the outset of the semester about what PPSL would entail. It also appeared that some student counselors felt out of place and unsure about their roles at schools and community agencies while conducting PPSL, suggesting that some stakeholders (e.g., student counselors and site supervisors) lacked a full appreciation of how PPSL at MU was conceptualized and intended to be practiced. Similarly, some site supervisors seemed confused about how to incorporate student counselors in daily activities at sites and unclear about their roles as supervisors. These findings indicating a lack of direction were somewhat surprising to the researcher given the presence of an administrative structure such as COC. Moreover, given that MU has been recognized as a service-learning leader in graduate counselor education (Arman & Scherer, 2002; Barbee et al., 2003), the researcher did not expect findings to suggest conceptual and practical complications in the implementation of PPSL.

Confusion and uncertainty on the part of some student counselors and site supervisors suggested that these parties were not heavily involved in shaping their PPSL, but rather were responding to guidelines and conceptualizations put forward by COC. In this way, while COC sought to improve PPSL by standardizing its execution in all settings, COC policies might have failed to reflect the unique needs and interests of all

parties. As a result, some of the potential strengths of service-learning pedagogy, such as empowering sites to provide input regarding what will be learned and allowing students to respond to the emerging needs of service recipients (Jacoby, 1996), seemed to be less apparent at MU.

Pre-practicum service-learning as providing direction. Participants' accounts also spoke to PPSL as a way to provide student counselors with a clearer view from which to make academic and professional decisions. Beginning student counselors were described as "green" and in need of information about the field of professional counseling. Pre-practicum service-learning was understood as a way for student counselors to learn about themselves and the counseling profession. In particular, this study's findings suggested that PPSL helped student counselors to identify their professional interests and non-interests, such as whether school counseling suited them. Pre-practicum service-learning was also shown to encourage student counselors to understand work environments at different schools and community agencies. In these respects, PPSL at MU seemed to resemble a form of undergraduate service-learning called capstone experiences, which Heffernan (2001) described as pedagogies that helped students to synthesize their understanding of the discipline and to smooth students' transition to the professional world.

Contrary to the researcher's expectations, PPSL was rarely described as providing a sense of direction related to values of social responsibility and service to the community. The lack of data corresponding to student counselors' development in these areas appeared to be a reflection of the policies and procedures guiding PPSL. In particular, policies and procedures existed that encouraged training outcomes over

service outcomes and that placed student counselors in settings where they were asked to observe and/or participate in activities specific to professional counseling. In another study of PPSL in graduate counselor education, Burnett et al. (2004) described PPSL projects that: (a) placed student counselors in non-clinical settings (e.g., a local housing authority), (b) encouraged student counselor-service recipient mutuality, and (c) were found to foster student counselor outcomes that seemed to combine professional and social development. While limitations to Burnett et al.'s study existed (e.g., an absence of a control group), it demonstrated that PPSL in graduate counselor education can be designed as service-oriented and achieve service-related outcomes.

Monroe University's apparent lack of attention to PPSL as a form of social responsibility ran counter to the researcher's expectations. Based on the extant service-learning literature concerning undergraduate students (e.g., Giles and Eyler, 1994a; Heffernan, 2001) and graduate student counselors (Kenny & Gallagher, 2000), the researcher expected PPSL at MU to be conceptualized and practiced as service-focused. However, the present study's findings in this area did provide insights into the fit of MU's model of PPSL to service-learning typologies reviewed for this study (Heffernan, 2001; Sigmon, 1997). Heffernan's service-learning categories failed to encapsulate the scope of PPSL practices at MU, largely because PPSL at MU: (a) emphasized training considerably more so than service and (b) allowed shadowing as a method of completing the fieldwork requirement. In comparison, PPSL at MU was more adequately captured by Sigmon's typology, which is a broad framework acknowledging that service-learning practices can stress either service or learning, or both.

Involvement

Also emerging from interviews and document review were perspectives of student counselors' involvement. Involvement regularly emerged in the data as a way to understand PPSL and as a way to distinguish PPSL from practicum training. Three areas of student counselor involvement were identified in this study: level of participation, feelings of responsibility, and supervision.

Level of participation. Student counselors participated in PPSL in a variety of ways, ranging from shadowing professional counselors to giving psycho-educational presentations to co-facilitating therapy groups. The extent of student counselors' participation during PPSL appeared to align with previous examinations of service-learning at the graduate level. In particular, like other graduate students conducting service-learning (Logsdon & Ford, 1998; Reittinger & Schwabbauer, 2002), student counselors at Monroe University (MU) seemed to be: (a) granted autonomy and authority at sites, (b) called upon to design and carry out broad-based interventions, and (c) asked to conduct activities that were informed by discipline-specific practices and knowledge.

Unlike what has been documented in most other instances of service-learning at the graduate level (e.g., Barbee et al., 2003; Reittinger & Schwabbauer, 2002) there were explicitly stated limitations around student counselors' level of participation. Student counselors were prohibited by a COC guideline from providing individual, family, or group counseling. This guideline appeared to set a dividing line between acceptable and unacceptable student counselor involvement. Moreover, the guideline seemed to be reflective of MU's emphasis on PPSL as a form of student counselor development more so than as community service. In particular, student counselors were ultimately

responsible for being aware of and following rules around professional counseling practice, not being aware of and responding to the needs of the community and its institutions.

In addition, while student counselors at MU appeared to be more heavily involved than undergraduate students might be in similar settings, it also seemed that participants in this study tended to describe PPSL as introductory. Expressions such as “taste,” “brush,” and “get their feet wet” were used to explain PPSL. A study of PPSL at University of New Mexico offered a similar understanding of PPSL as introductory (Barbee et al. 2003). Barbee et al. said that PPSL provided student counselors “the first glimpse of counseling related activities” (p. 109).

Also similar to earlier studies of PPSL in graduate counselor education (Arman & Scherer, 2002; Barbee et al., 2003), it appeared that PPSL was designed and conceived as an introduction to professional counseling practices (e.g., daily routines, clinical activities, and administrative tasks). Conversely, PPSL at MU did not seem to be an introduction to the values and practices of community service or social responsibility. An implicit and explicit emphasis on PPSL as a form of traditional professional development (e.g., clinical competencies and professional socialization), but not social development (e.g., personal responsibility for facilitating social change), contradicted this researcher’s expectations of PPSL as a method of graduate counselor training. It also challenged Kenny and Gallagher’s (2000) position that service-learning is different from practicum training in that service-learning stresses and affirms student counselors’ commitment to social responsibility.

While surprising on some levels, PPSL as principally geared toward fostering traditional professional development was an indication of how PPSL appeared to be conceptualized at MU. Pre-practicum service-learning seemed to be viewed as a precursor to practicum training, placed along the same pedagogical continuum, with practicum training requiring a higher level of participation on the part of student counselors. Thus, while PPSL and practicum training were understood as different in terms of the level of participation required of student counselors, these two training methods were also similar in that they evoked mindsets and behaviors emphasizing student counselors' familiarization with and practice of traditional professional counseling competencies.

Feelings of responsibility. Participants in this study also seemed to distinguish PPSL and practicum training by student counselors' feelings of responsibility. During PPSL, student counselors felt some responsibility for themselves and their own learning, but not ultimate responsibility for the delivery of services. Meanwhile, in practicum training, student counselors felt the bulk of responsibility for counseling processes and outcomes. Barbee et al.'s (2003) description of distinctions between PPSL and practicum training at University of New Mexico pointed toward this difference. Barbee et al. contended,

> [Practicum training experiences] occur near the end of a student's training and are capstone courses designed to provide a transition for the student into professional life. Pre-practicum service-learning, on the other hand, occurs at the beginning stages of student training and provides the first glimpse of counseling-related activities, either through direct participation or observation. (p. 109)

The perceived limits to student counselors' responsibility for service delivery seemed to be another indication of MU's focus on PPSL as a training aid more so than a community service effort. While student counselors tended to accept most opportunities to carry out activities at their sites, it seemed that training needs and interests primarily guided student counselors' choices. Meanwhile, the needs of the sites and service recipients appeared secondary.

Supervision. A third way PPSL emerged as less involved than practicum training was related to supervision. Pre-practicum service-learning supervision was described as varied, diversely understood, and uniquely practiced. It seemed that the variation of PPSL supervision was mostly site supervisor dependent, including factors such as (a) site supervisors' interests in student counselor training and supervision and (b) competing demands placed on site supervisors by clinical and administrative responsibilities.

In addition, PPSL supervision was not as close or comprehensive as supervision during practicum training. It is not altogether surprising that PPSL supervision was experienced as less comprehensive and less close than practicum training supervision. Pre-practicum service-learning at MU seemed to be conceived and designed in such a way that student counselors were not to be engaged in activities necessitating thorough and frequent monitoring, as is characteristic of supervision of beginning practicum students. Moreover, unlike practicum training supervision, few guidelines seemed to exist that defined the scope of PPSL supervision. Community Outreach Center policies did not dictate the frequency, duration, or emphasis of PPSL supervision. Moreover, PPSL supervision was not guided by CACREP standards. In fact, even Honnet and Poulsen's (1989) seminal source outlining effective service-learning practice communicated only a

vague message regarding the uses and forms of service-learning guidance: “[Effective practice] includes training, supervision, monitoring, support, recognition, and evaluation to meet service and learning goals” (“Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and Learning,” ¶ 8).

In general, PPSL supervision seemed to run counter to the expectations of university-based PPSL participants (i.e., COC staff, counselor educators, and student counselors). In particular, these PPSL participants appeared to expect PPSL supervision to be universal and close. Regarding universality, it was expected that PPSL supervision would be similarly practiced across all settings and participants. This expectation pointed toward a lack of familiarity with reciprocity (Jacoby, 1996), which encourages diverse service-learning processes, such as site supervision, by including input from all parties involved. With respect to closeness, there seemed to be an expectation that PPSL supervision would resemble what Long, Larsen, Hussey, and Travis (2001) called rigid supervision. Long et al. described service-learning supervision on a continuum, from flexible to rigid, and suggested that rigid supervision be in place when service-learning activities “require technical skill or carry some risk of harm to or by students” (p. 9). In the case of PPSL at MU, an expectation of rigid PPSL supervision seemed reasonable given some of the more clinically demanding tasks and responsibilities held by student counselors (e.g., co-facilitating therapy groups). In fact, the confusion and frustration communicated by some alumni in this study might have been in response to the gap that sometimes existed between the type of supervision that was needed (rigid) and the type of supervision that was received (flexible).

Ways of Learning

Participants in this study appeared to understand PPSL as different from other methods of pre-practicum training. Non-field-based pre-practicum training methods seemed to be described as conceptual ways of learning, while accounts of PPSL suggested that it was viewed as an applied way of learning. Participants seemed to view non-field-based pre-practicum training methods as information gathering and framework building. In comparison, PPSL was viewed as bringing coursework to life, witnessing professional counseling first-hand, and practicing counseling skills. Interview data comparing PPSL to non-field-based pre-practicum training methods appeared to reveal participants' tendency to value applied ways of learning more than conceptual ways of learning. The apparent value placed on applied ways of learning in this study seemed consistent with earlier research suggesting that experiential learning methods strengthen student counselors' training by promoting student engagement (Eriksen et al., 2002), helping student counselors to "see continuities between their current lives, their schoolwork, and their futures" (McAuliffe, 2002, p. 12), and facilitating critical reflection (Woodard & Lin, 1999).

The emergence of ways of learning as a finding in this study was also noteworthy because it appeared to reflect how PPSL was conceptualized in this context. In particular, it seemed that PPSL at MU was viewed as an educational tool, or a supplement to traditional information-dissemination approaches to student counselors' training. In this way, PPSL in this context appeared to align with Howard's (1998) belief that service-learning served as a "critical learning complement to the academic goals of the course" (p. 21).

Notably absent from interview and document data was the idea of PPSL as a way of learning about values such as social responsibility and community service. Pre-practicum service-learning at MU, it seemed, was not conceived or practiced as a pedagogy for citizenship (Mendel-Reyes, 1998; Rhoads, 2000). Similar to Arman and Scherer's (2002) description of PPSL in a graduate counselor education program at University of New Mexico, PPSL at MU seemed to stress learning over service. To borrow from Sigmon's (1997) typology of service and learning, PPSL at MU resembled service-LEARNING, in which learning goals were primary and service goals were secondary.

Pre-practicum service-learning and practicum training. Ways of learning also emerged as salient to PPSL and practicum training differences. Pre-practicum service-learning seemed to be viewed as learning <u>about</u> the counseling profession, whereas practicum training appeared to be understood as learning <u>how to</u> provide counseling. During PPSL, student counselors learned about the counseling profession by becoming more familiar with the day-to-day realities of professional counselors in schools and community agencies. A similar finding was illustrated in a study of PPSL at University of New Mexico (Arman & Scherer, 2002). In MU classrooms incorporating PPSL, participants' descriptions of PPSL-related activities, papers, and discussions also demonstrated a focus on learning about counseling and themselves as future counselors. In comparison, practicum training seemed to evoke different perspectives from alumni. Alumni's stories of practicum training—on-site and in the classroom—suggested that student counselors viewed this training method as a way to learn how to provide counseling. While at the university-based training site, student counselors undergoing

practicum training seemed to learn how to provide counseling by engaging in clinical activities, such as conducting intakes and writing session notes. In the practicum classroom, student counselors: (a) heard information from guest speakers about how to incorporate different counseling techniques and (b) gave case presentations apparently designed to facilitate student counselors' current and future work with clients.

This distinction between PPSL and practicum training (i.e., learning about versus learning how to) has not been identified in the previous literature. However, the role of learning as a way to distinguish service-learning and practicum training has been discussed. Fisher and Finkelstein (1999) proposed that practicum experiences and service-learning were different to the degree that service and learning were emphasized. Service-learning, according to Fisher and Finkelstein, was designed to reflect a balance between service and learning, while many practicum experiences focused on students' learning. A similar point was made by Kenny and Gallagher's (2000) in a position piece outlining the value of service-learning as a method of graduate counselor training. Kenny and Gallagher contrasted service-learning and practicum training, suggesting that service-learning reflects service ethics and practicum training fosters student counselors' professional skills and socialization. While findings in the present study did not conform to Kenny and Gallagher or Fisher and Finkelstein's distinctions between service-learning and practicum training, this study did reveal a PPSL-practicum training distinction with respect to learning. In doing so, the present study provided some indication of how PPSL can be distinct from other applied aspects of the graduate counselor education curriculum.

Time

Time emerged as meaningful in participants' accounts of PPSL. Finding time for PPSL in the midst of other demands (e.g., work, family, and coursework), seemed difficult for student counselors. One participant said that completing PPSL was "an awful lot to juggle" for student counselors. Interview data suggested that student counselors occasionally responded to these time demands by seeking convenient ways to complete PPSL, such as remaining at the same site across courses incorporating PPSL.

The notion of finding time also seemed to enter into participants' discussions of in-class reflection of PPSL. Some participants acknowledged that there was not enough time to integrate and reflect upon student counselors' PPSL. Furthermore, time seemed to shape how PPSL was ultimately evaluated. Some student counselors appeared to consider PPSL as worth the time it required, while others seemed somewhat frustrated by the costs of devoting time to PPSL in light of its benefits. Other studies of PPSL in graduate counselor training, namely Burnett et al. (2004) and Arman and Scherer (2002), also mentioned time as a potential barrier to PPSL. One participant in Burnett et al. noted that PPSL demanded "too much time away from my family" and that "time could be better spent in classroom" (p. 187).

Participants' awareness of time as informing PPSL processes and student counselors' satisfaction with PPSL was notable for two reasons. First, time as important suggested an emphasis on training processes and outcomes of PPSL more so than service processes and outcomes. Second, student counselors' frustrations about balancing PPSL responsibilities in the midst of other demands appeared to indicate limits to: (a) student

counselors' level of involvement in the planning of PPSL and (b) student counselors' overall emotional investment in conducting PPSL.

Time has also arisen in previous examinations of service-learning and faculty involvement. Hammond (1994) found that the most often cited source of dissatisfaction by faculty was the time and energy demands of integrating service-learning. Similarly, Ward (1996) acknowledged that one of the barriers to initiating, implementing, and sustaining service-learning was that it might require too much time, energy, and funding by faculty who already have a variety of professional and programmatic demands. These studies by Hammond and Ward, along with some reports by counselor educators in the current study, suggested that students are not alone in their consideration of time in relation to service-learning-related decisions and reflections.

Research Questions

Three areas of interest guided this study. The areas were: (a) specific aspects that define PPSL, (b) perceived effects of PPSL on student counselors, and (c) comparisons of PPSL and practicum training. The following discussion places these three areas within the context of previous research and the researcher's expectations.

Defining Aspects of Pre-Practicum Service-Learning

Pre-practicum service-learning at MU was a course-based training method that placed student counselors in schools and community agencies. Student counselors typically selected their placements from a list of established PPSL sites, and prior to beginning PPSL, student counselors interviewed with site supervisors to assess fit. Because student counselors and site supervisors had the opportunity to make informed decisions about with whom to conduct PPSL and what learning experiences might be

involved, some aspects of reciprocity appeared to be in place in this context (Jacoby, 1996). However, it seemed that the voices of service recipients (e.g., high school students or clients at a community agency) were not included in determining what was to be learned from PPSL. The omission of service recipients' voices was possibly a reflection of: (a) the exclusion of site supervisors and service recipients from this study's participant pool, (b) the researcher's emphasis on PPSL as experienced by student counselors, and/or (c) this graduate counselor education program's apparent focus on PPSL as a way of advancing student counselors' professional and academic development (more so than fostering competencies of community collaboration and social responsibility).

Also missing was involvement by core faculty in the graduate counselor education program. Given program documents espousing PPSL as central to graduate counselor training practices at MU, it was surprising to learn that: (a) PPSL courses were not taught by core faculty and (b) core faculty were not involved in day-to-day administrative efforts carried out by COC. Furthermore, in the present study, the views of core faculty members were notably absent. While the omission of core faculty's voices was due in part to this study's sampling methods, some questions were raised about the meaningfulness of PPSL within the graduate counselor education program at MU. For example, if PPSL was central to graduate counselor training at MU, why were two of the three courses integrating PPSL taught by adjunct and assistant professors? At the same time, PPSL's continued presence and potential evolution at MU might indicate that decision-makers within the academic department and program perceive PPSL to hold some value.

Pre-practicum service-learning: Student counselor involvement. Interview and document data suggested that student counselors carried out a variety of activities during PPSL, ranging from psycho-educational presentations to observation to academic advising to co-leading a therapy group. Similar activities were mentioned in descriptions of PPSL at University of New Mexico (Arman & Scherer, 2002; Barbee et al., 2003). Findings from this study also revealed that observation, or shadowing, was part of some student counselors' PPSL. Some student counselors "tag[ged] along" as professional counselors provided clinical services, consulted with colleagues, or performed administrative duties. Shadowing as a way of conducting PPSL seemed inconsistent with earlier conceptualizations of undergraduate service-learning (Bringle & Hatcher, 1996; Heffernan, 2001) as well as the present study's a priori definition of graduate-level service-learning. In particular, Bringle and Hatcher (1996), Heffernan, and the current researcher described service-learning as an experience that involved students' direct interaction with and service to members of the community. This study's findings, however, indicated that some student counselors carried out PPSL not by providing direct service to community members, but rather by observing professional counselors perform tasks. This finding appeared to reflect this particular graduate counselor education program's emphasis on using PPSL as a method of advancing student counselors' professional development, while also pointing toward the peripheral nature of ideals of service and social responsibility.

At the other end of the participation continuum, some student counselors conducted direct counseling services during PPSL without the presence or purview of a professional counselor. This finding was inconsistent with the researcher's expectations

as well as with descriptions in the literature of student counselors' activities during PPSL. Neither Arman and Scherer (2002) nor Barbee et al. (2003) outlined such activities in studies of PPSL at University of New Mexico. Moreover, at Stetson University, Burnett et al. (2004) stated that student counselors were "specifically advised not to be in the role of counselor" while participating in PPSL (p. 185). This inconsistency between how PPSL was described by previous researchers and how PPSL was experienced by alumni in this study might reflect previous researchers' focus on the effects of PPSL in graduate counselor training rather than an understanding of the realities of how PPSL was practiced by student counselors.

A lack of appreciation of and attention to student counselors' actual experiences during PPSL seems important on two grounds. First, there are laws, accreditation standards, and professional codes of conduct governing student counselors' training and interactions with others in professional settings. In the views of this researcher, these regulatory principles and rules must be attended to in order to help maintain the integrity of the counseling profession and ensure the safety of all parties involved. Second, student counselors participating in PPSL are placed in community settings (some of which are professional counseling contexts) and given the opportunity to carry out tasks (some of which are counseling-related tasks). The potential for harm to and by student counselors at sites warrants the need for reasonable levels of monitoring and complete appreciation of student counselors' fears and potential concerns.

Pre-practicum service-learning and other forms of work-based learning. Pre-practicum service-learning at MU seemed similar to apprenticing in that student counselors were placed in professional counseling contexts and observed or participated

in professional counseling tasks. Other studies of service-learning in undergraduate and graduate education seemed consistent with this emphasis on matching students' field experience during service-learning with their future work as professionals. Barton (2000), for example, included service-learning as part of a multicultural science education course and encouraged pre-service teachers to co-teach science lessons to children at a homeless shelter. Similarly, Thomas et al. (1998) described a service-learning project in which graduate students in occupational and physical therapy conducted evaluations of elderly individuals at a senior citizens' center. At the same time, other examinations of service-learning suggested that students' service was not always intimately tied to their future work as professionals. At Stetson University, for example, Burnett et al. (2004) indicated that student counselors conducted PPSL at one of four community agencies, three of which were settings that did not appear to entail the work of professional counselors (i.e., a nursing home, a community center, and a local housing authority).

Pre-practicum service-learning as similar to apprenticing appeared to be both valuable and problematic in this context. It was valuable in that it seemed to help fulfill one of the objectives of PPSL at MU, namely helping student counselors learn more about themselves as future professionals (e.g., student counselors' work-related interests and non-interests) as well as the field of professional counseling (e.g., the roles of school counselors). At the same time, it appeared that part of the struggle of PPSL at MU was that student counselors were sometimes confused about their roles at sites. Student counselors' confusion was not altogether surprising given the context in which PPSL occurred. In particular, students who were being trained to be counselors were sometimes placed in environments where: (a) counseling services were provided, (b) service

recipients could benefit from student counselors' assistance, and (c) sites and sites supervisors lacked clarity about the roles and responsibilities of student counselors.

Pre-practicum service-learning was also similar to cooperative education in that it varied across sites and participants. Interview and document data revealed that numerous factors shaped PPSL, including student counselors' comfort and interest level, services carried out by the sites and/or site supervisors, and time. Student counselors and site supervisors' contributions to the customization of PPSL suggested elements of reciprocity in the design and practice of PPSL at MU. At the same time, negativity around varied PPSL practices also existed. Rather than perceiving PPSL's variation as purposeful and appropriate customization, some alumni seemed to communicate views that PPSL was disorganized and confusing. The apparent negativity around PPSL as varied might be interpreted as a reflection of the shortcomings of PPSL in this context. It might also be an indication of PPSL participants' misinformation or lack of information about flexible service-learning models that incorporate choice (Long et al., 2001) and respond to the unique needs and interests of all parties involved (Jacoby, 1996).

Reflection. Reflection of PPSL was also asked about and addressed in this study. Interview and document data suggested that multiple methods were used to encourage student counselors to reflect upon PPSL. These methods included class discussions, on-going written reflections, end-of-semester process groups, and summary papers. Somewhat surprisingly, the presence and importance of reflection of PPSL seemed to vary across participants' accounts. This finding might have been due to the researcher's tendency to inquire about reflection of PPSL in a general way, without taking into

account that reflection of PPSL could be experienced differently across graduate counseling courses incorporating PPSL.

The researcher's interest in reflection of PPSL arose from the previous literature's attention to reflection as an important part of service-learning practice. One of service-learning's intellectual forebears, John Dewey, believed that reflection was vital to bridging actions and consequences (Dewey, 1916). Similarly, Eyler (2001) referred to reflection as the hyphen in service-learning and suggested that reflection bridged what students experienced and observed in the community with what they discussed, read, and wrote about in their course. The findings in this study suggested that reflection was experienced by student counselors as secondary to their field experiences, which was somewhat surprising to the researcher given: (a) MU's apparent role as a service-learning leader in graduate counselor education (Arman & Scherer, 2002; Barbee et al., 2003) and (b) the presence of COC staff to help facilitate reflection of PPSL.

Participants' accounts seemed to indicate that the bulk of student counselors' reflection of PPSL occurred toward the end of the semester and served purely as a summarization of student counselors' experiences at schools and community agencies. These reflective practices, namely reserving reflection of service-learning until the end of the semester and asking students to reflect by summarizing their field experiences, appeared to run counter to some principles of effective service-learning reflection (Eyler, 2001). In another study of PPSL in graduate counselor education, Arman and Scherer (2002) pointed toward PPSL practices that seemed to undervalue reflection. As in the present study, Arman and Scherer found that time constraints limited the frequency, quality, and duration of in-class discussions of PPSL. Taken together, the present study

and Arman and Scherer provide some indication of the complexity and difficulty involved with infusing reflection of PPSL into graduate counselor education courses.

Findings from the current study also suggested that student counselors usually reflected on PPSL through professional and academic lenses. Across methods of reflection, student counselors seemed to be asked how PPSL shaped their professional and academic competencies (e.g., "How did your service-learning relate to your degree, major, or career"). Another indication of student counselors' use of professional and academic lenses to reflect on PPSL was participants' tendency to refer to PPSL as informing professional outcomes (e.g., assessing work-related interests and non-interests) and academic outcomes (e.g., selecting a school and/or agency track). It should also be noted that some aspects of reflection of PPSL appeared to geared toward student counselors' self-awareness (e.g., "What have you felt, learned, observed, or become aware of through this experience") and knowledge of their community (e.g., "What did you learn about your community"). In all, the focus of PPSL reflection in this particular graduate counselor education program seemed consistent with MU's service-LEARNING model, which emphasized learning over service goals.

Community Outreach Center. The role of COC in the set-up and execution of PPSL also emerged in this study. This study indicated that COC staff carried out many activities to facilitate PPSL at MU, including orientation, matchmaking, problem-solving, and quality control. Community Outreach Center staff interacted with student counselors, counselor educators, and site supervisors in efforts to smooth the process of PPSL from beginning to end. While these efforts were not always noted by alumni in this study, COC's administrative presence appeared to reflect the value placed on PPSL in the

graduate counselor education program at MU. Moreover, COC staff seemed to ease the load carried by counselor educators to organize and oversee PPSL, which is noteworthy given earlier studies suggesting that the numerous demands of facilitating service-learning can be frustrating for instructors (Hammond, 1994) and discourage instructors from integrating service-learning at all (Ward, 1996). Finally, contrary to the message sent by the absence of core counseling faculty in the implementation of PPSL at MU, COC's presence seemed to indicate that PPSL was a valued part of the graduate counselor education curriculum.

Perceived Effects of Pre-Practicum Service-Learning on Student Counselors' Overall Development

Interview and document data suggested that PPSL was perceived to help student counselors achieve their professional bearings in the field of counseling. The particular ways that PPSL appeared to facilitate this process was by: (a) helping student counselors become familiar with professional counseling roles and environments, (b) offering student counselors an opportunity to carry out professional activities, (c) encouraging student counselors to assess their professional interests, and (d) granting student counselors a chance to network within the counseling field. This finding suggesting an emphasis on student counselors' professional development seemed to align with studies of PPSL at University of New Mexico (Arman & Scherer, 2002; Barbee et al., 2003). Similar to findings in the current study, Arman and Scherer explained that PPSL at University of New Mexico "places a greater value on students' 'learning' than on 'service' to the community" (p. 73). In another study of PPSL at University of New Mexico, Barbee et al. found significant differences between student counselors who

participated in PPSL at University of New Mexico and those that did not engage in PPSL, with PPSL participants displaying higher levels of counselor self-efficacy and lower levels of anxiety. Barbee et al.'s findings pointed toward the idea of PPSL as a vehicle through which student counselors could become more comfortable and confident as future professionals. This study's findings indicating PPSL's relationship to professional development in graduate counselor training were not unlike those indicated in studies of service-learning in undergraduate education (e.g., Markus et al., 1993; Swick & Rowls, 2000). However, some studies of service-learning as a method of training undergraduate students found that service-learning did not seem to help students to clarify their major or make career plans (e.g., Gray et al., 1999). The emergence of professional development-focused student counselor outcomes of PPSL seemed to be an indication of: (a) the professional and academic lenses through which student counselors reflected on PPSL, (b) the basic design of PPSL at MU, which placed student counselors in counseling contexts and encouraged student counselors to observe and participate in professional counseling activities, and (c) the practical, discipline-centered nature of graduate counselor training (Nelson & Neufeldt, 1998).

The researcher was surprised to find very little mention of PPSL as a means of fostering student counselors' social responsibility. Following the first round of interviews, the researcher noted a dearth of data linking PPSL at MU to service ethics or social responsibility. During follow-up interviews, the researcher encouraged participants to share their thoughts about the apparent absence of themes of social responsibility or social justice. The bulk of the responses suggested that few participants experienced PPSL as being informed by or informing commitments to service. This finding was

unexpected, in part, because of previous research indicating the capacity of service-learning to shape undergraduate students' thoughts and feelings about community service and social responsibility (Giles & Eyler, 1994a; Gray et al., 1999). It was also surprising given some of the recent literature extolling service-learning (Kenny & Gallagher, 2000), or similar community-based training methods (Paisley & Hayes, 2003), as a way of strengthening student counselors' dedication to community service and social justice. Retrospectively, given that PPSL at MU seemed to be designed and experienced as apprenticing and cooperative education, it made sense that student counselors might have been more aware of their own professional development and professional socialization rather than service to the community or social responsibility.

At the same time, it seems to the present researcher that conceptual and practical space remained for PPSL at MU to be expanded and asked to fulfill broader objectives. Pre-practicum service-learning and practicum training at MU appeared share many emphases, processes, and expected outcomes. Missing from PPSL in this context, in the eyes of this researcher, is an acknowledgement of and attention to PPSL as a pedagogy that can awaken student counselors to social responsibility and community service, both of which seem to be ideals well-suited to counseling's principles and daily practices.

Comparisons of Pre-Practicum Service-Learning and Practicum Training

For the most part, participants' descriptions of PPSL and practicum training indicated views of the two training methods as distinct. Alumni tended to refer to PPSL as "totally different" and "very different" from practicum training. One of the primary ways that the two training methods were understood to be different was related to student counselors' involvement. This difference and its place in the context of the literature and

the researcher's expectations were addressed earlier in this chapter. In brief, PPSL was understood to require less involvement than practicum training with regard to level of participation, feelings of responsibility, and supervision.

The second way that PPSL was different from practicum training at MU appeared to be around structure. In general, PPSL seemed to be less structured than practicum training. While alumni considered practicum training as clearly defined and safe, PPSL seemed to be viewed as unstructured and lacking clarity. This difference between the two training methods had not been explored directly in the extant literature of PPSL in graduate counselor training. However, there were some studies of service-learning at the undergraduate and graduate level that seemed to reveal service-learning's struggle for structure as well as the role of structure in facilitating successful service-learning. In an unpublished manuscript examining PPSL at University of New Mexico, Arman, Barbee, Carlin, and Lowhar (1995) listed a number of changes made to PPSL at the suggestion of key PPSL stakeholders. Many of these changes seemed to reflect the graduate counselor education program's emphasis on providing more structure and clarity around PPSL, such as defining the mission of PPSL, outlining PPSL requirements, and requiring student counselors to sign contracts with site supervisors to specific hours and duties. Structure also emerged as important to service-learning in Honnet and Poulsen's (1989) delineation of principles of effective practice. In three of 10 Honnet and Poulsen's principles, structure appeared to hold some meaning. According to Honnet and Poulsen, effective service-learning practice: (a) "provides structured opportunities for people to reflect critically on their service experience," (b) "articulates clear service and learning goals for everyone involved," and (c) "clarifies the responsibilities of each person and

organization involved" ("Principles of Good Practice for Combining Service and Learning," ¶ 2, ¶ 3, and ¶ 5).

The researcher's expectations of PPSL in this context also seemed relevant to this discussion. A review of the service-learning literature revealed few, if any, intra-departmental programs like COC designed to facilitate service-learning. Pre-study conversations with the COC director suggested that COC staff worked closely with student counselors completing PPSL and that PPSL at MU was well-organized. Accordingly, this study's finding that suggested that PPSL sometimes lacked structure was inconsistent with the researcher's expectations of PPSL in this context. In addition, the present study raised potentially important questions about how to match pedagogical intentions and practices, within graduate counselor education specifically and graduate training in general.

Pre-practicum service-learning at MU fulfilled the researcher's expectations in that PPSL was understood to be and labeled as service-learning. Moreover, PPSL seemed to be a notable part of student counselors' training in that it was: (a) integrated within three course cores of MU's curriculum and (b) required student counselors to devote 20 or 30 hours of time outside of the classroom. Finally, facilitators of PPSL at MU experienced some of the same pitfalls faced by the researcher in conducting service-learning (e.g., making time for reflection) and others who integrate service-learning into their curricula (e.g., ensuring that what students expect resembles what they experience in the field).

Similarities between pre-practicum service-learning and practicum training. Alumni's descriptions of PPSL and practicum training also suggested some similarities

between the two training methods. First, both PPSL and practicum training seemed to be understood as "real." Student counselors were placed in professional counseling contexts during PPSL and asked to observe and/or participate in the work of professional counselors. Similarly, during practicum training, student counselors carried out a variety of typical professional counselor activities, such as conducting intakes, meeting with clients in individual therapy, and recording session notes. The integration of PPSL and its apparent experience as "real" seemed meaningful given earlier research suggesting that applied aspects of student counselors' training were lacking (e.g., Education Trust, 1996; Hollihan & Reid, 1994; Watkins, Lopez, & Campbell, 1987).

Pre-practicum service-learning and practicum training were also described as similar in that they were both "first steps" into the counseling profession. Pre-practicum service-learning was often understood as student counselors' introduction to professional counseling. Accordingly, student counselors' activities and responsibilities usually seemed commensurate with their statuses as novice trainees. In a similar way, during practicum training, student counselors seemed to be under close supervision and received feedback consistently around their work with clients. The similarities between PPSL and practicum, such as them both being "first steps," appeared to be rarely addressed in the literature of service-learning as a method of graduate counselor training. It seemed that previous researchers (e.g., Arman & Scherer, 2002; Barbee et al., 2003; Kenny & Gallagher, 2000) were intent on describing differences between the two training methods, possibly because they recognized the potential for interested readers to perceive them as very similar. It might have also been the case that previous researchers were attempting to: (a) define service-learning in the context of graduate counselor training by comparing

it to a known entity (i.e., practicum training) and/or (b) make the case for the unique value of service-learning as a way to train student counselors. Nonetheless, the present study helped to reveal ways in which PPSL and practicum training were similar and different.

Limitations

The current study explored PPSL in the context of graduate counselor education. Four themes emerged that pointed toward the processes and outcomes of PPSL at MU. Interview and document data also provided insights into the research questions that guided this study, which focused on: (a) specific aspects that define PPSL, (b) perceived effects of PPSL on student counselors' overall development, and (c) comparisons of PPSL and practicum training.

There were also some important limitations to this study. First, only seven alumni participated in the current study. While saturation seemed to be reached within this participant group, including more alumni participants might have allowed the researcher to capture divergent viewpoints and experiences. Second, six of the seven alumni participants were female, thereby allowing for the possibility that: (a) male student counselors' experience of PPSL at MU was not fully portrayed and/or (b) sufficiency was not met. The researcher consulted with a qualitative research expert prior to discontinuing participant recruitment and telephone interviews in an attempt to make a more informed decision about fulfillment of saturation and sufficiency criteria. Third, this study only included counselor education faculty members at MU who taught a course incorporating PPSL. In addition, these counselor educator participants were not members of the core

faculty at MU. Accordingly, this study's sample of counselor educators was not representative of the counselor education faculty at MU.

A fourth limitation to consider was participants' leanings and motivations. Some participants appeared wedded to the idea of PPSL as a valuable method of student counselor training, possibly because of their affiliations to MU or their investment in PPSL. In general, PPSL-advocating participants tended to: (a) highlight positive aspects of PPSL and (b) suggest that PPSL's troubles had been acknowledged and were in the process of being resolved. At the same time, some participants, particularly alumni who responded to the researcher's original recruitment e-mail, seemed oriented toward PPSL's pitfalls and areas of improvement. Efforts were made by the researcher to account for participants' inclinations while collecting data, analyzing data, and writing the manuscript. These efforts included: (a) corroborating data across data collection methods (i.e., interview and document data) and sources (i.e., student counselors, doctoral student coordinators, and counselor educators), (b) using member checks so that participants could judge the credibility of the researcher's account, (c) collaborating with a qualitative research expert to devise interview questions, and (d) receiving feedback from a qualitative research expert that assessed, in part, the researcher's ability to gather data addressing strengths and limitations of PPSL at MU.

A fifth limitation was that participants were reflecting on their experiences and understandings of PPSL at different time points. More specifically, alumni's accounts of PPSL in this context were based on experiences that occurred two to five years ago, whereas counselor educator and doctoral student coordinators' reports seemed to refer to more recent PPSL experiences. Therefore, alumni's accounts might not have captured the

ways that PPSL had evolved, as described by some counselor educators and doctoral student coordinators. The researcher attempted to address this limitation by corroborating data across data collection methods and sources as well as by using member checks designed to elicit constructive feedback from participants.

Finally, because of difficulties locating, gaining access to, and recruiting alumni participants, snowball sampling was used as a way to include some alumni in this study. Snowball sampling methods tend to include individuals who have strong and multiple inter-relationships (Faugier & Sargeant, 1997). Thus, alumni who had not remained in contact with their peers following graduation or who did not have strong peer relationships during training might have been overlooked in this study. Altogether, these sampling limitations suggest that, while this study's findings might contribute to understandings of similar cases, readers should be discouraged from making blanket comparisons or generalizing these findings from one context to another.

Along with the sampling limitations indicated above, another potential limitation existed regarding the researcher's capacity to adequately describe PPSL from the perspective of participants. The researcher entered into this study with a set of expectations and biases of service-learning models and practices. For example, based on a literature review and personal experience, the researcher expected PPSL at MU to reflect a dual emphasis on service and learning. Similarly, the researcher assumed that PPSL would have training value and that reflection would be an important part of student counselors' experiences during PPSL. In some cases, the researchers' expectations and biases aligned with the current study's findings; sometimes they did not. Whether ultimately accurate or inaccurate, the researcher's expectations and biases shaped how the

researcher examined, understood, and described participants' accounts of PPSL. Steps were taken to help ensure trustworthiness of the researcher's account, including: (a) incorporating member checks, (b) obtaining feedback from external reviewers (one of which was a qualitative research expert), and (c) providing a rich description of the data.

Implications for Graduate Counselor Training

The current study's findings offered insights into the use of PPSL as a method of training student counselors. The success of PPSL in this context seemed to lie in exposing student counselors to professional counseling at schools and community agencies. During PPSL, student counselors shadowed professional counselors, co-facilitated group therapy, conducted psycho-educational presentation, and carried out administrative work. These and other activities appeared to help student counselors to: (a) appreciate their future work, (b) learn by observing and participating in professional counseling activities, and (c) begin to attain their professional bearings. Meanwhile, the failure of PPSL at MU seemed to lie in its lack of structure. Despite attempts by COC staff to outline and specify PPSL, it appeared that student counselors were sometimes unsure about their roles and unattended to by site supervisors. Moreover, another shortcoming of PPSL in this context was the apparent time and energy demands placed on student counselors, many of whom seemed to have competing responsibilities.

This study also suggested that PPSL could be diversely practiced. At MU, student counselors observed and participated in many different aspects of professional counseling and were involved at varying levels across sites. The variety of PPSL in this context was, at times, a benefit in that it allowed student counselors to undergo experiences that closely matched their interests. For example, student counselors who wanted to learn

more about professional counseling in the legal system could identify sites that offered related experiences. At the same time, the diversity of PPSL appeared to create difficulty and confusion for student counselors and site supervisors who were still learning their roles and responsibilities. In many ways, the present study seemed to indicate the value of PPSL as a method of encouraging student counselors to witness and participate in professional counseling, but that some of the value felt lost when PPSL was experienced by student counselors as unclear or lacking support.

A related implication for the use of PPSL for graduate counseling training seems to be the importance of being familiar with sites and site supervisors. For some student counselors, PPSL might be their first exposure to the counseling profession. It seems crucial to this researcher that student counselors are placed in settings where professional counselors are working competently, professionally, and ethically.

The present study also illustrated the views and experiences of PPSL participants who conducted a learning-focused model of service-learning. Pre-practicum service-learning was not altogether different from practicum training at MU. Student counselors conducting PPSL were (a) placed in professional counseling contexts and (b) encouraged to reflect on PPSL through professional and academic lenses. It seemed that PPSL and practicum training commonalities helped PPSL coordinators and instructors to conceptualize and incorporate PPSL into graduate counseling curricula. However, PPSL's similarities to practicum training appeared to place limits around the possibilities of PPSL, one of which is to call upon and foster student counselors' values of service and social responsibility.

The similarities between PPSL and practicum training at MU raise a broader question about PPSL's usefulness as a training method in graduate counselor education. Unlike many service-learning programs at the undergraduate level (e.g., Markus et al., 1993) and within content-focused graduate programs (e.g., Perkins et al., 1999), graduate counselor education already includes field-based training in the form of practica. The present study's findings suggested that, while PPSL and practicum training shared features, student counselors experienced PPSL and practicum training differently. Pre-practicum service-learning was generally considered as an introduction to the field of professional counseling, whereas practicum training was perceived as actually performing professional counseling work. In addition, it seemed that student counselors' PPSL experiences informed subsequent decisions about where and with whom student counselors chose to conduct future training. In sum, while PPSL and practicum training similarities were present at MU, evidence existed to suggest that PPSL can be a useful and additive part of the graduate counselor education curriculum.

The current study did not demonstrate a service-oriented framework for PPSL processes and outcomes at MU. The absence of such findings conflicted with the researcher's expectations and hopes regarding the use of PPSL in graduate counselor education. In particular, the researcher expected PPSL at MU to be guided by and foster ideals of social responsibility and service to the community. It could be argued that MU's omission of service-related ideals in the implementation of PPSL warrants their reconsideration of the term service-learning to describe student counselors' pre-practicum field experiences. At the same time, MU's model of PPSL might also suggest that

service-learning can and does exist in numerous forms and that service-learning can be incorporated in attempts to fulfill a variety of objectives.

Another implication for graduate counselor training was the presence of COC. Some of the duties of COC staff included orienting student counselors and site supervisors to PPSL, maintaining quality control, and facilitating end-of-the-semester process groups. By coordinating these aspects of PPSL at MU, COC staff seemed to lessen the time and energy that counselor educators needed to devote to initiating and overseeing PPSL. While this design might have lightened counselor educators' PPSL responsibilities, it might also have allowed counselor educators to remain less connected to PPSL. In doing so, counselor educators, as was suggested by some of this study's findings, might have been unfamiliar with the week to week experiences of their students at PPSL sites, and thus potentially unaware of: (a) how to facilitate problem resolution and (b) how to bridge student counselors' fieldwork and course material.

Lastly, the findings from the present study suggested that there were some student counselors for whom PPSL at MU was more appropriate. As proposed in another study of PPSL in graduate counselor education (Barbee et al., 2003), PPSL appeared to be experienced as more helpful for student counselors who wanted or needed to reap the designed benefits of PPSL at MU, such as attaining professional bearings. For student counselors who already felt comfortable and had experience in professional counseling settings, PPSL was sometimes experienced as a "waste of time." In an earlier study with a similar finding, Barbee et al. suggested improving student counselor satisfaction and PPSL's overall effectiveness by pairing student counselors to sites that offered training opportunities that matched student counselors' level of training and experience. The

author of the present study also recommends: (a) reshaping PPSL to include objectives of social responsibility as a way to potentially enhance student counselors' personal investment, (b) encouraging more advanced student counselors to mentor beginning student counselors during PPSL, and/or (c) reducing the number of hours required for more experienced and trained student counselors.

Directions for Future Research

The present study was a qualitative exploration of service-learning as a form of training graduate students. In this study, graduate-level service-learning was defined, described, and understood as distinct from undergraduate service-learning. Rarely had previous research explored similarities and differences between graduate and undergraduate service-learning. It is recommended that future research of graduate-level service-learning reflect an appreciation of: (a) ways that undergraduate service-learning research informs and does not inform service-learning in graduate training and (b) how the context of graduate training, and more particularly the graduate program, shapes service-learning (e.g., goals, processes, and outcomes).

Similar to a study of PPSL at University of New Mexico (Arman & Scherer, 2002), supervision and reflection of PPSL emerged as meaningful and, in some ways, in need of improvement. Further study of supervisory and reflective aspects of PPSL in this context is suggested. It seems important that future examinations of PPSL supervision include the perspectives of site supervisors to better understand how site supervisors experience their roles and responsibilities. With regard to PPSL reflection, future research might benefit from conducting observations of in-class discussions, reviewing students' written reflections, and comparing different forms of reflection.

This study also raised questions about PPSL in graduate counselor training that warrant further investigation. Pre-practicum service-learning at MU emphasized professional development noticeably more so than social responsibility. Additional exploration of the conceptualization and implementation of PPSL in graduate counselor education seems important to understand the fit and usefulness of service-learning within a curriculum that already includes practica. Moreover, the omission of service-oriented student counselor outcomes in this study calls to mind questions about whether other pedagogies exist that can more effectively shape student counselors' commitment to service and social justice.

The current study's findings also suggested that PPSL might be shaped by whether student counselors are conducting PPSL at schools or community agencies. Further study of the school-community agency comparisons seems valuable, as it might add to understandings of PPSL as a method of training school counselors and agency counselors. This study also illustrated that some student counselors at MU carried out PPSL at the same site and during the same semester as their internship or group practicum. Appreciating how these instances are similar to and different from other experiences of PPSL in graduate counselor training might be useful. Another question raised by this study was the ways that community and university contexts shape PPSL. As suggested earlier, the city in which MU is located provided a context that informed PPSL, possibly including what duties student counselors were called to perform, how service recipients experienced student counselors, and when, where, and how long supervision occurred. The university context, in a similar way, might have shaped PPSL, such as how student counselors learned about PPSL, what value was given to reflection,

and the level of training and experience student counselors had when they participated in PPSL. These and other questions related to the community and university contexts seem interesting and worth further study.

Finally, the present study provided a description and understanding of PPSL at MU. It is also recommended that future studies of PPSL in graduate counselor training explore the processes and outcomes of PPSL at institutions other than MU. It seems important to appreciate the various ways that PPSL can be conceptualized and practiced. For example, how do other graduate counselor training programs that integrate PPSL compare PPSL and practicum training? What are their goals of PPSL? What are student counselors' primary responsibilities during PPSL? Can PPSL be integrated throughout student counselors' entire course of study and if so, how? How are other community-based pre-practicum training methods, such as Oregon State University's social advocacy model (Osborne & Collison, 1998), similar to and different from PPSL at MU?

This study was exploratory in nature and guided by an interest in understanding an apparently unique phenomenon—PPSL as a method of graduate counselor training. While many of the researcher's curiosities have been explored, many questions remain answered. This study builds upon the extant literature and hopefully offers a basis for future research.

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Appendix

Semi-Structured Interview Questions

Interview Questions for Alumni Participants

1. What year did you graduate from the counselor education master's program at Monroe University (MU)?
2. What course(s) did you take where you participated in pre-practicum service-learning (PPSL)? Was PPSL required as part of the course(s)? Where did you carry out your PPSL?
3. What counseling course work had you had prior to participating in PPSL? Had you had any previous work experience in counseling?
4. Are you currently working in the counseling field? In what capacity?
5. If I followed you through a typical day at your PPSL site, what would I see you doing?
6. Suppose I was a new student in the MU counselor education master's program, what would you tell me about PPSL there?
7. So far, we've talked a lot about your experiences on-site as part of PPSL. Now, I'd like to talk about what happened in the classroom during your courses involving PPSL. Tell me about your PPSL discussions, papers, and class activities.
8. What 3 words would you use to describe your PPSL experience?
9. Can you tell me why you selected the counselor education master's program at MU? How much did you understand about PPSL?

10. What kinds of recommendations would you make to another graduate counselor education program that was considering implementing PPSL as part of its training of student counselors?
11. As a professional counselor (and/or as someone who experienced PPSL), can you offer some advice to the counseling field regarding the pitfalls of PPSL? The merits?
12. Were there aspects of your professional work as a counselor for which you wished you had been better prepared?
13. What 3 words would you use to describe practicum training at MU?
14. Describe a typical practicum experience as part of the graduate counselor education program at MU from the time you arrived on-site until the time you left.
15. Now, tell me about your practicum-related discussions, papers, and class activities.
16. Tell me what you see as the limitations of your practicum training at MU. The strengths?
17. Some people say that PPSL in graduate-level counseling is no different than practicum training. Based on your experiences at MU, what would you say?

Interview Questions for Counselor Educator Participants

1. What course(s) have you taught that integrated PPSL? Can you briefly describe the focus of the course(s)? Where did student counselors carry out their PPSL?
2. How many semesters how you been teaching counseling course(s) that integrates PPSL at MU?
3. What did you know about PPSL before you started teaching your course at MU that incorporated PPSL?

4. Suppose I was a new faculty member in the MU graduate counselor education program, what would you tell me about PPSL?
5. If I followed student counselors through a typical day at their PPSL site, what would I see them doing?
6. Now, I'd like to talk about what happens in the classroom during your courses involving PPSL. Tell me about PPSL discussions, papers, and class activities.
7. What 3 words would you use to describe student counselors' PPSL at MU?
8. How has PPSL changed, if at all, since its inception at MU or since you first learned about it?
9. What kinds of recommendations would you make to colleagues at another universities who were considering implementing PPSL in their graduate counselor education courses?
10. As a counselor educator involved with PPSL, can you offer some advice to the counseling field regarding the pitfalls of PPSL? The merits?
11. Are there aspects of student counselors' overall training at MU that you think should be changed to better prepare them for their responsibilities as professional counselors?
12. What 3 words would you use to describe practicum training at MU?
13. Tell me what you see as the limitations of practicum training at MU. The strengths?
14. What can you tell me about master's students' practicum related discussions, papers, and class activities.

15. Some people say that PPSL in graduate-level counseling is no different than practicum training…Based on your experiences as a counselor educator at MU, what would you say?

Interview Questions for Counselor Education Doctoral Students

1. What graduate program are you in? What year?
2. How long have you been involved with PPSL?
3. Can you describe your role and basic responsibilities with the Community Outreach Center?
4. What was your understanding of PPSL before you began working in this capacity?
5. Suppose I was a new student in the MU graduate counselor education program, what would you tell me about PPSL?
6. If I followed master's students through a typical day at their PPSL site, what would I see them doing?
7. You play a special role in the operation of PPSL at MU. What do you know about student counselors' experiences with PPSL that I wouldn't learn from reading a brochure?
8. What 3 words would you use to describe student counselors' PPSL experience at MU?
9. Now, I'd like to talk about what happens in the classroom. Tell me about the process group and/or PPSL discussions, papers, and class activities.
10. What kinds of recommendations would you make to another graduate counselor education program that was considering implementing PPSL as part of its training of master's students in counseling?

11. As someone who works with pre-practicum service-learners, can you offer some advice to the counseling field regarding the pitfalls of PPSL? The merits?

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Education

1999-2005 Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana

Major: Counseling Psychology

- Associate Instructor, Graduate Assistant
- GPA 3.96

1995-1999 Kalamazoo College, Kalamazoo, Michigan

B.A., Psychology

- Graduated magna cum laude.
- Intercollegiate varsity athlete, captain 1999

Awards and Scholarships

1999-2004 Dean's Minority Fellowship, Indiana University

- Honor given by the University Graduate School to top minority graduate students based on academic achievement.

2004 Grant-in-Aid Research Award, Indiana University

- Award presented by the University Graduate School to provide financial assistance for dissertation research on service-learning as a method of graduate counselor training.

2003 Outstanding Associate Instructor Award, Indiana University

- Prize presented to a small, select group of associate instructors in the School of Education whose teaching efforts demonstrate focused and sustained attention to intellectual engagement and academic quality.

2002 Outstanding Associate Instructor, Indiana University

- Award chosen annually by faculty from the Counseling and Educational Psychology department and granted to two associate instructors on the basis of excellence in teaching.

2000 Alan P. Bell Award, Indiana University

- Peer-elected honor given for exceptional growth during clinical practicum at the Center for Human Growth.

1999 Marshall Hallock Brenner Prize, Kalamazoo College

- Departmental award presented to one student whose work reflected excellence within and outside of the academic setting.

Clinical and Supervision Experience

2005-Present

Psychology Resident, Dr. Svec Institute of Psychological Services,
Chatham, Ontario, Canada
Supervisor: Henry J. Svec, Ph.D.

- Delivering individual and couples therapy services to adults and adolescents. Clients present with a variety of concerns, including depression, chronic pain, grief, anxiety, and interpersonal relationships.
- Integrating assessment findings to improve treatment. Assessments include cognitive (e.g., WAIS-III), attention (e.g., (CPT), symptom (e.g., TSI) and personality (e.g., BPI) as well as biofeedback.

2004-2005

Intern, University Counseling Center, Georgia State University
Supervisors: Gary Glass, Ph.D., Virginia Bell-Pringle Ph.D.,
and Cathy Brack, Ph.D.

- Provided individual, couples, and group therapy to a diverse university population. Client concerns include: anxiety, grief, trauma, depression, and interpersonal relationships.
- Carried out outreach activities to educate campus community around multiculturalism, crisis management, and tutoring student-athletes.
- Supervised a doctoral-level counseling student with her clinical caseload. Reviewed therapy and supervision videotapes to enhance delivery of clinical services.

2003-2004

Counselor, Center for Human Growth, Indiana University
Supervisor: Edward Delgado-Romero, Ph.D.

- Provided individual and couples therapy to clients who present with a wide variety of concerns, including anger management, ADHD, depression, and problems with interpersonal relationships. Participating in weekly supervision and case consultations. Reviewing videotaped sessions to more effectively provide care for clients.
- Coordinated with psychiatric and other mental health agencies when necessary for continuation of care.

2003-2004

Counselor, Indiana Family Project, Indiana University
Supervisor: Thomas Sexton, Ph.D.

- Served adolescents and families struggling with problems of conduct, drug use, and delinquency. Participating in weekly supervision and case consultation. Completing extensive documentation of services to ensure purposeful assessment and treatment.
- Operated under the Functional Family Therapy evidence-based model to engage family members, facilitate behavior change, and generalize growth due to treatment.

Clinical and Supervision Experience Cont'd.

2003

Clinical Supervisor, Indiana University
Supervisor: Susan Whiston, Ph.D.

- Provided weekly individual supervision to counseling master's students who offered individual and group therapy in a wide range of clinical settings, including schools, outpatient hospitals, university counseling centers, and juvenile corrections facilities. Supervised six master's students, three per semester.
- Reviewed videotaped supervision meetings to enhance delivery of services. Implemented a developmental supervision model. Participated in group supervision of supervision.

2001-2002

Counselor, Psychiatric and Counseling Services, Bloomington, Indiana
Supervisor: Theresa Rader, PsyD

- Provided individual and group psychotherapy in an outpatient setting to individuals diagnosed with anxiety, depression, and personality disorders. Conducted treatment planning with patients. Served on an interdisciplinary treatment team. Co-led a traumatic brain injury group with speech and hearing professionals.
- Administered and scored cognitive and personality assessments, including the WAIS, WRAT, TAT, MCMI, MMPI, and sentence completion. Wrote detailed assessment reports to aid psychological care.

2000

Counselor, Center for Human Growth, Indiana University
Supervisors: Chalmer Thompson, Ph.D. & Michael Smith Ph.D.

- Worked as a counselor for individuals, couples, and families seeking mental health services. Developed and carried out treatment plans with clients presenting with depression, questions about sexual orientation, and problems in interpersonal relationships. Participated in weekly staff meetings, in-service trainings, case consultations, and supervision sessions.
- Performed outreach activities in order to educate college students on the benefits of psychotherapy and on ways to handle stress.

Professional Experience

2003-2004

Co-Coordinator, Armstrong Teacher Educator Program,
Indiana University

- Bridged the theory-practice gap in teacher education programs by linking exemplary public school teachers to faculty and student members of the School of Education.
- Worked with university and public school administrators to strengthen the program's efforts to build school-university partnerships. Organizing and serving on the advisory board to carry out program initiatives.

Professional Experience Cont'd.

Consultant, Adult Fitness Program, Indiana University

2003

- Facilitated a psycho-educational series on the topics of wellness, communication, and stress management to older adults involved with a university-based fitness program. Interacted with fitness professionals to enhance service delivery.

Associate Instructor, School of Education, Indiana University

2000-2003

- G203, Communication in the Classroom
  - Educated pre-service teachers on counseling principles and skills to enhance their professional development. Designed creative in-class activities that have gained popularity across many different sections of the course.
  - Facilitated service-learning component, linking community organizations and student members of the School of Education.

Associate Instructor, Collins Living-Learning Center, Indiana University

2003

- L200, Supporting Community Change
  - Developed and instructed a course to promote university-community partnerships. Led efforts to initiate and support social change in a local neighborhood.
  - Enhanced students' appreciation of the dynamics of low-income neighborhoods. Organized a neighborhood-wide block party and a scavenger hunt for the children in the area.

Graduate Assistant, Walden University, Indiana University

2002

- Graduate Level Psychological Testing Course
  - Assisted student examiners in administrating personality and cognitive ability tests, including the WAIS, WISC, WPPSI, WRAT, WIAT, TAT/CAT, MMPI, NEO, BDI, BSI, BASC, and sentence completion.
  - Offered constructive and directive feedback to students to help ensure valid administration.

Lab Counselor, Kelley School of Business, Indiana University

2001

- Met individually with undergraduate business majors to discuss career-related opportunities. Provided feedback to students on self-assessment projects and presentations.
- Participated in in-service trainings and weekly staff meetings to strengthen my skills in the role of lab counselor.

Conference Presentations and Publications

Jett, S. T. & Roth, A. (November, 2003). Mobilizing and organizing people who are impoverished. Presented at GET UP! Conference, Bloomington, IN.

Jett, S. T. (Spring, 2003). Student teacher-student relationships. *Curriculum and Teaching Dialogue*.

Jett, S. T. & Sexton, T. L. (August, 2002). Cognitive and affective empathy and the working alliance. Paper presented at the American Psychological Association Convention, Chicago, IL.

Hanna, D. R., Constintinou, M., Jett, S. T., Rodriguez, N., John, S. E. & Holguin, G. (August, 2000). Ethnic minority and women students: Thriving in graduate school. Symposium presented at the American Psychological Association Convention, Washington, D.C.

Whittingham, M. & Jett, S. T. (April, 2000). A moral-cognitive behavioral approach to working with gang members. Paper presentation at the American-Chinese Exchange Program Conference on Developments in Counseling Psychology, Bloomington, Indiana.